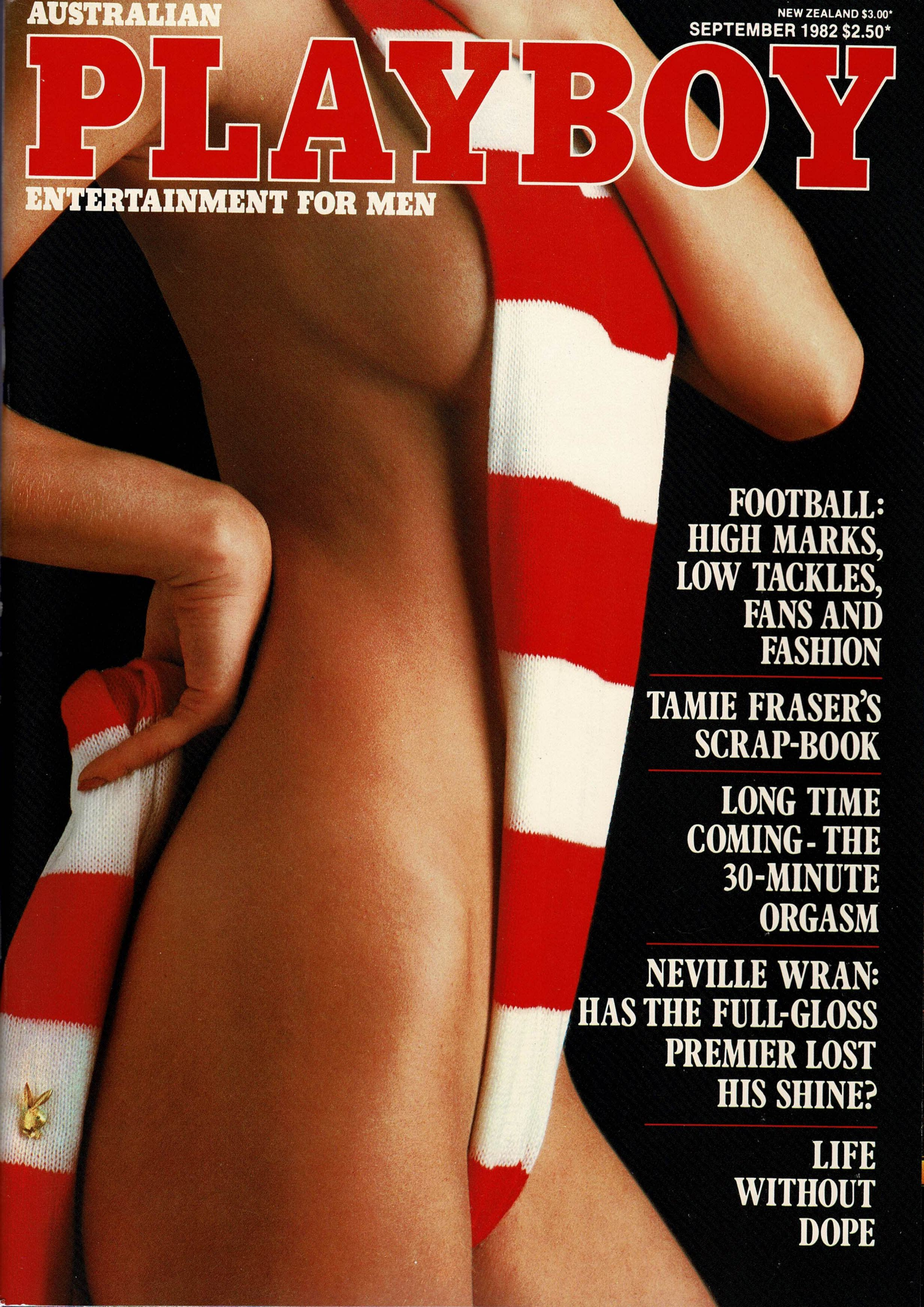
AUSTRALIAN

PLAYBOY

ENTERTAINMENT FOR MEN

NEW ZEALAND $3.00*
SEPTEMBER 1982 $2.50*



FOOTBALL: HIGH MARKS, LOW TACKLES, FANS AND FASHION

TAMIE FRASER'S SCRAP-BOOK

LONG TIME COMING - THE 30-MINUTE ORGASM

NEVILLE WRAN: HAS THE FULL-GLOSS PREMIER LOST HIS SHINE?

LIFE WITHOUT DOPE

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PLAYBILL

FOOTBALL FINALS — The last rites of winter performed in the first month of spring. September is finals month in every code around the country and PLAYBOY is kicking in to celebrate the climax to the '82 season. We caught the mood with the most spectacular supporter of the year for our cover girl, a sight well worth the admission money. The interview is with Victorian Football League supremo Dr Allen Aylett, the man who presides over the most rapidly expanding empire in Australian sport. We sent Associate Editor **Neil Jameson** in search of Tommy Raudonikis, rugby league hero and anti-hero, the brawlingest little bloke you'd ever not want to meet on a football field. The profile action shot came from the camera of **Peter Crawford.**

When it comes to premiership, Neville Wran is one helluva winner. But someone who is not a fan of the NSW Labor Premier is **Tony Reeves,** a freelance journalist and a Sydney City Council Labor Alderman. In Nifty, Reeves takes a look at the cracks in the seemingly flawless Wran image. By the way, we're told Wran is a Balmain rugby league fan, so make what you will of that. **Frants Kantor** and **Phil Barlow** supplied the illustration.

Super science fiction writer **Robert Silverberg** gets off At The Conglomeroid Cocktail Party in a fabulous bit of fantasy which dabbles in futuristic fucking. **John Kurtz** has painted up a cosmic storm to match the words.

In the final leg of his Middle East trilogy, Features Editor **P.D. Jack** undertakes a nomadic search, to finish as bemused as the Crusaders, Napoleon, Rommel and everyone else who attempted to solve the puzzle.

Like the preceding PLAYBOY hands who chronicled their attempts to beat the booze or kick the smoking habit, **Frank Dunbar** makes a fervently funny attempt to curtail his dope intake. This time he gets blown out by a smokescreen of sheer nostalgia but manages to settle for a conditional surrender.

The lot of a prime minister's wife is more about pulling votes than cracking jokes. So, in the interests of loosening up the Fraser electoral image, we've concocted Tamie's Scrap-book, a slightly irreverent shot at what the camera might have caught if it had an ear to match its eye.

Brits who thought the Falklands crisis triggered a touch of the international traumas might be casting nervous glances at Hong Kong. In 1997 the Empire is due to hand the jewel of the Orient back to the Chinese, and writers **Philip Brooks** and **Antoine Raphael Garcia** have applied a bit of free thought to the potential pressures in a piece of fiction called Hong Kong — 1997.

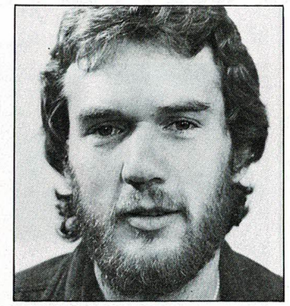
As Motoring Editor **Rob Luck** will admit, being in the driving seat for PLAYBOY does have its moments of pleasure. Luck found just such a moment on a European autostrada after he had flown to Italy to sample the Six Appeal of a super-quick Alfa Romeo GTV.

September is a magical month for girls. Our Playmate is **Sandi Shepherd,** and when not decorating our pages with her sensuous frame, Sandi is brightening up the Sydney scenery. Sandi was a babe in arms when her folks came here from chilly Canada, and it is apparent from **Rico Mettbach's** photography that sunny Sydney has brought her to full bloom. Grab an eyeful of The Philippines' finest in our stunning pictorial of **Tetcha.**

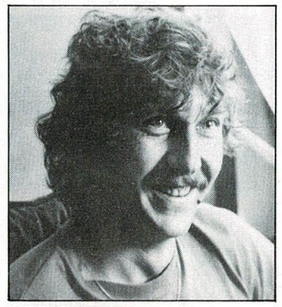
And you might cease wondering what you missed out on by excluding Spain from your last world trip when you feast your eyes on our The Girls of Spain pictorial.

If a job is worth doing, it's worth doing properly. That just might be the sentiment behind Long Time Coming, **Richard Rhodes'** revelation on the wonders of the 30-minute orgasm.

We've topped off this issue with a revealing pictorial on the lovely **Lynda Wiesmeier** by **Richard Fegley** and fashion editor **Wendy Adnam** has rounded up three players to show what footballers can wear when they're getting their off-field kicks. In fact, there's enough reviews, features and humor to take you clear through to October.



JAMESON



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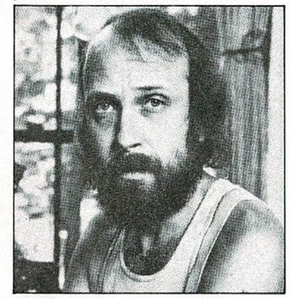
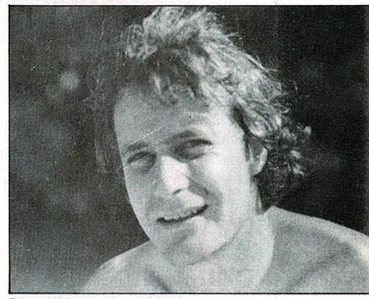
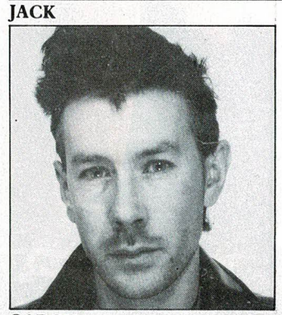


KURTZ

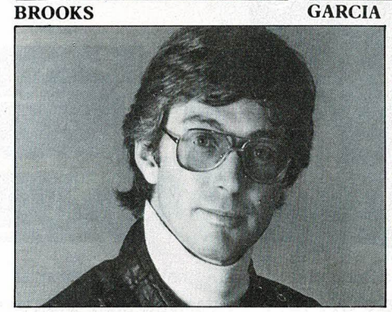


JACK

BROOKS

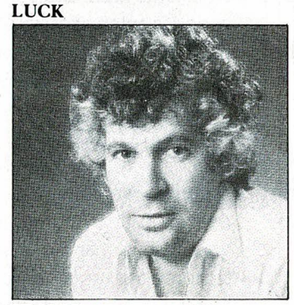


GARCIA



LUCK

SILVERBERG



FEGLEY

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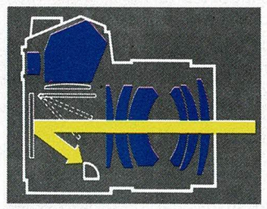

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AUSTRALIAN PLAYBOY
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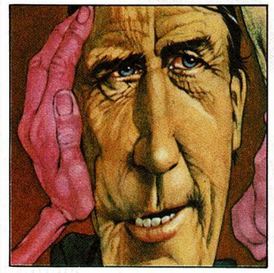

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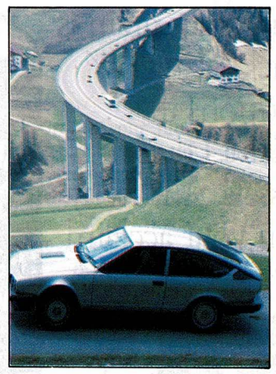

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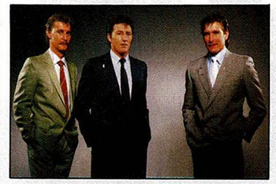

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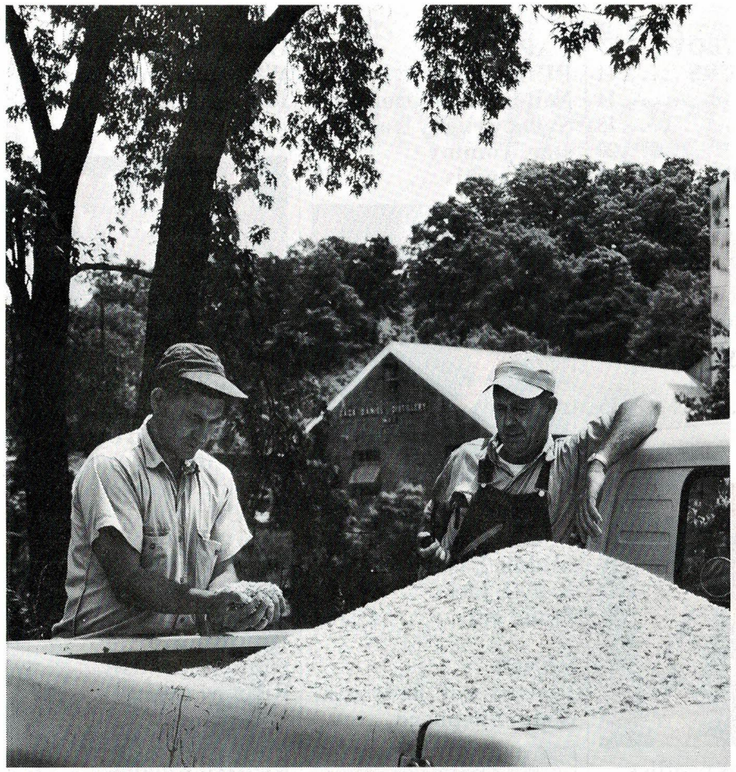

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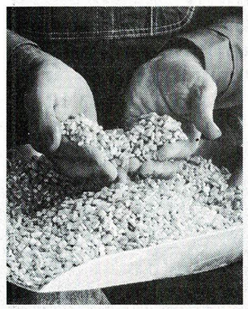

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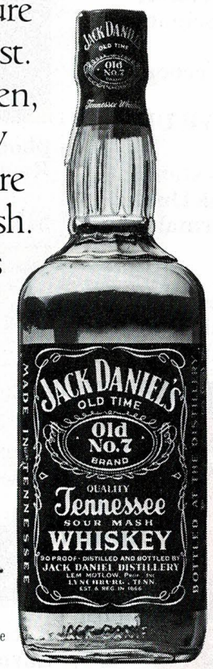

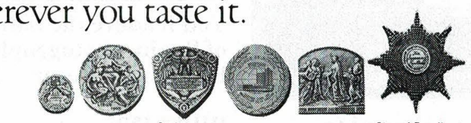

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AUSTRALIAN
PLAYBOY

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DEAR PLAYBOY

address your letters to dear playboy, po box 746, darlinghurst 2010

SEXY SINGERS

I really enjoyed your Girls of TV photo-spread in your December 1981 issue. I was wondering if you could do a similar feature on Girls of Australian Rock.

There are some really beautiful singers around like Sharon O'Neill, Renee Geyer, and my favorite of all, Chrissie Amphlett from The Divinyls.

I know that many other male PLAYBOY readers would also love to see these ladies gracing a photo-spread in your magazine.

Also, how about doing a big feature interview with Chisel's Jimmy Barnes or Midnight Oil's Peter Garrett. They would be more interesting than, say, Billy Joel.

Mick Cooper,
Athol Park, SA.

ELUSIVE BUNNY

Whatever happened to the rabbit's head on your May cover? It's the first thing I look for in every issue but for the life of me I couldn't find it this time.

Was it a printing error? Did you just forget it? Or, as I suspect, were you overruled by Miss Stoner?

Ray Lynch,
Warburton, Vic.

Keep on looking! — Ed.

UNCOVERED

Your magazine has been good over the past years but I think your pornography is going downhill. I know that the Premier of Queensland censors your magazine but I reckon you could go just before the limit in uncovering your well-chosen girls.

My mate has got a few *Men Only* magazines and we go mad over them. Maybe you could hot your mag up a bit more and give us banana benders a bit of a go.

Shane Davey,
Queensland.

GOING ANIMAL

Lynda Stoner must be admired for her devotion to the abused animals of this world. However, organisations such as the Animal Welfare League and others find money can buy more happiness for unfortunate animals faster and more humanely than words.

Her intelligent mind could put to good use the $35,000 she may have been offered to pose nude, if not for herself, then for the sake of thousands of suffering animals the Animal Welfare League's meagre income now partially supports.

With the co-operation of one of PLAYBOY's sensitive photographers, Lynda could do more to further the efforts of Animal Welfare League and others than they could do in a year. Apart from that, a gifted woman should never conceal her talents.

As a fellow animal lover, I feel Lynda has more to offer than simply words. How about it, Lynda?

Alan Murphy,
Redhead Beach, NSW.

I'm writing in reference to your May issue. When I picked it up and saw Lynda Stoner on the cover, I just about went out of my mind as I'm one of her biggest fans. I think she is the greatest lady that God ever put on this earth and the interview that was done with her was very good. Keep up the good work.

Les Moulton,
Bunbury, WA.

FOR WOMEN TOO

I was very excited to see that Wendy Bacon was the major interview in your August issue. From memory, this is the first time that Australian PLAYBOY has featured a female in that section of the magazine. I hope that this means you are setting a precedent to be followed by interviews with other Aussie women such as, perhaps, Kath Walker, Ita Buttrose, Gillian Armstrong, Margaret Fink or Judy Davis.

I laugh every time I see the tag "Entertainment for Men" on your covers, as PLAYBOY is a truly intelligent magazine that transcends the sexist image. Maybe men are the major buyers of your product but I'm sure that many Aussie women read it too.

Charmaine Frost,
Leichhardt, NSW.

MAD ABOUT MARIEL

I was just knocked out by your feature on lovely Mariel Hemingway in June PLAYBOY. I'd get physical with her any time.

George Masters,
Niddrie, Vic.

Thanks for the preview of Mariel Hemingway's *Personal Best* in your June issue. She's a great looking bird but it would have been better if you'd used more explicit nude shots. Anyway, the double page spread of Mariel doing the splits looks great on my wall. Can't wait to see the movie.

A.D. Douglas,
Gosford, NSW.

PLUS TWO

The very amusing piece on 18 Ways to Break Your Neck in the June issue was great stuff. But you should have made it 20. Your researchers forgot to mention hot air ballooning and wind surfing — these two sports are becoming increasingly popular and sure come into the "macho" category.

F.L.,
Muswellbrook, NSW.

TRIBUTE TO DALE

Congratulations on your fine magazine. I was really impressed with your May issue and particularly your feature on Dale Buggins.

Having seen Dale perform at the local showground in 1980, I too thought he had everything stacked in his favor. Having enjoyed three years of moto-cross and ridden at the same showground, I had a great admiration for his prowess on two wheels and was shocked to hear of his death.

If there is a motor cycle heaven, then Dale will be there and he'll still be the top performer.

D.K. Atkins,
Launceston, Tas.

FILLING THE VOID

Now that the day of the real sports car has been lost in the slipstream of time and sophistication, it's apparent motorbikes have moved up to fill the void. Megabikes (PLAYBOY, June) spotlighted the specialisation in the sports bike field and combined the elements of pose and performance so important to the boulevarde cowboy.

The age of the sports car might be a fading memory in the development of motoring, but I'm certain bikes balanced for scoring a rego sticker while running faster and tighter than the opposition are a suitable alternative.

G. Robson,
Norwood, SA.

MORE AUSSIES

A. Ellis' plea for more Aussie Playmates prompted your reply of "Turn to the centrefold. . . (Lynn Eason) our case rests." Since then, two more imports. Beautiful girls, yes, but come on Aussie PLAYBOY, lift your game.

If that other beautiful Aussie, Lynda Stoner, is serious about not appearing naked, why did she allow herself to be photographed in a wet, clinging swimsuit? I respect the lady very much but would like to know where she draws the line.

In praise of Linda Rhys Vaughn; I live on top of a hill with nothing but scenery and animals as far as the eye can see. I have a red setter, a german shepherd and drive an Austin Healey. So, Linda is invited to drop over anytime with her horses and sexy lingerie.

John Sutton,
Donnybrook, Vic.

2 WAYS TO TASTE THE WHISKEY IN WATERFORD.

1. New Waterford Cream is a skilful blend of fresh Irish cream and fine old Irish Whiskey. We say "skilful blend" because the whiskey is not drowned out by the cream and the cream is not overpowered by the whiskey. So when you take a sip—the first sensation is one of smooth mellowness followed by a delicious bite of whiskey as it goes down.

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*Competition open to all people 18 years of age and over.

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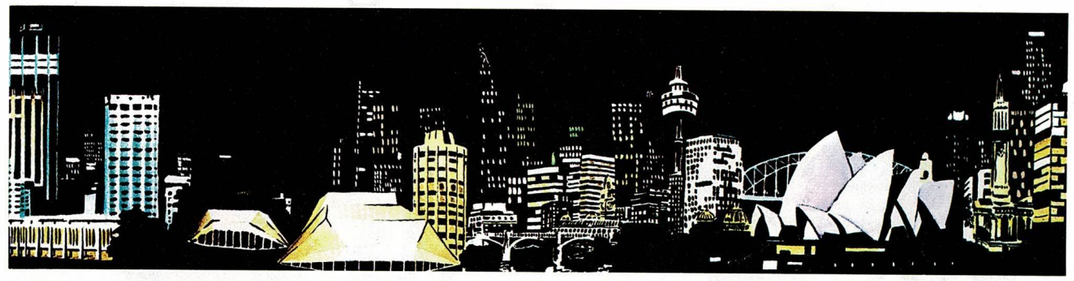
PLAYBOY AFTER HOURS



DOPE? NOPE!

Spelling counts — even in America, the country which gave us nite. When a man in Dallas, Texas, was booked for possession of cocaine, his lawyer noticed that the charge referred to a derivative of cocoa (as in Nestles), rather than to coca, as in nostrils.

Said the smart lawyer: "Our law places a burden on the state to dot all the Is and cross all the Ts. To do otherwise could deprive a person of his freedom."

It must have been a great speech, because the judge said: "I can't send a man to jail for possession of chocolate, can I?"

ALL CUT UP

Then there's the story of yet another lawyer who was hired by a Hindu couple who were "in disgrace" because their newborn son had been circumcised at the hospital without their permission. Circumcision is taboo under Hindu law. When asked how much he was suing for, the lawyer replied: "About a quarter of an inch."

ONLY IN ITALY

Rumor has it that the Italian Government has decided to invest in genetic engineering. The government-controlled company will, accordingly, be proudly named Genitalia.

HELP!

Yes, but the pay is sobering. Found in the Situations Vacant columns was the following ad: "Wanted, young man for hotel bottle shop. Staggered hours."

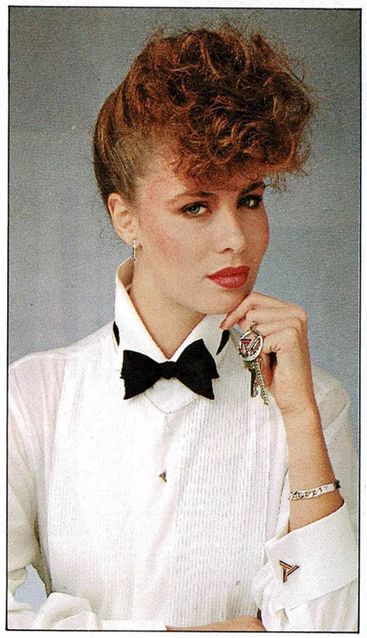
ON THE HOP

Things are really jumping in Stuttgart, Germany. A man who works the night shift discovered that his dear wife was not spending her evenings alone. By devious means he found out when her lover was coming to the house, and so sought his revenge. He put a frog in her bed when he went to work. The wife and her lover were entwined in a passionate embrace when the frog (obviously green with envy), landed on the lover's back.

The lady was so startled that she bit the man on the eyebrow — which subsequently required four stitches. Now, not only is the wife seeking a divorce on the grounds of mental cruelty, but the lover is also suing the husband. It seems that West German law stipulates that a husband is responsible for damages inflicted by his wife. We're not sure what the frog is doing these days.

ARE YOU GAME?

Amateur athletics it might well be but all those energy-giving breakfasts certain to be wolfed down during the Commonwealth Games in Brisbane (September 30 to October 9) cost money. While the contestants are running, jumping, swimming, diving, cycling and throwing, the bucks will



be running up at a rapid rate. Yes folks, there is even a price on competitive goodwill. One little scheme to help pay the freight for the Friendly Games is the sale of a range of gold and silver commemorative jewellery bearing the Games' official logo and mascot, a rather rotund 'roo named Matilda. The range runs the gamut from stud earrings to stick pins, cuff links to key chains but there is no guarantee they'll look as good on the average sports fan as they do on delightful Deborah Hutton, who we discovered wearing assorted sterling silver items. The jewellery (not Deborah) is available from most major retail outlets.

DUTY FREE

Australian visitors to such Asian flesh pots as Bangkok and Manila are being warned not to add anything more exotic than silk and watches to their list of souvenirs. The item evading customs and causing a few frowns in medical circles is a strain of venereal disease too tough for penicillin to subdue.

The resistant-type gonorrhoea is on the increase because it produces an enzyme capable of breaking down penicillin, rendering it useless. According to the rate it is spreading throughout Australia, it is apparently the one souvenir a traveller can easily give to a friend.

SEX DOWNER

Footballers might be rated as the super-jocks of winter, but one rumor doing the rounds of the dressing rooms this season has somewhat undermined the image.

In the interests of keeping top players clear of amphetamines and other artificial stimulants, a club doctor put it out that even casual use of uppers can play havoc with an athlete's sexual performance. The ruse worked well, keeping rookies clear of pills; but it played havoc with the off-field form of a few stars said to pop the odd pill.

BODY COUNTS

Army Reserve recruits take note. Ordered to shore up an eroding canal in Delaware, a detachment from the US Army Corps of Engineers took its earthmoving machinery to the wrong site. As a result, they flattened half of an important archeological site containing fossils from 70 million to 135 million years old. No actual casualties, but you can't get much deader than that.

D-I-Y LOBOTOMY

A new book for all those who are handy with their hands: Do-It-Yourself Brain Surgery and Other Home Skills.

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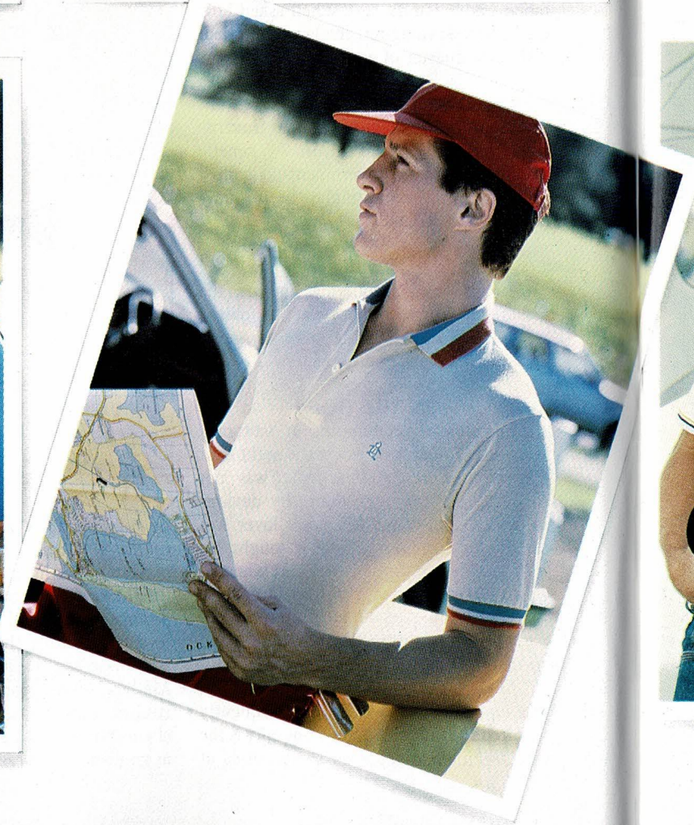
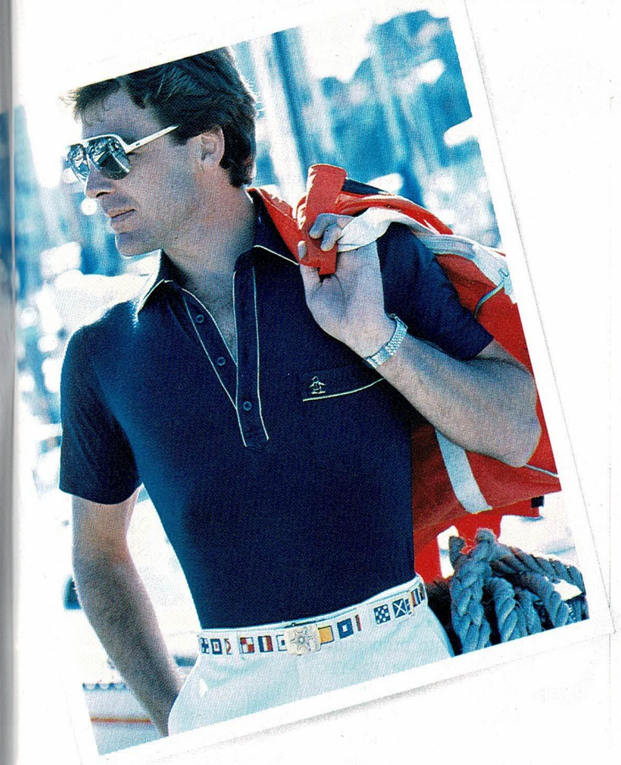
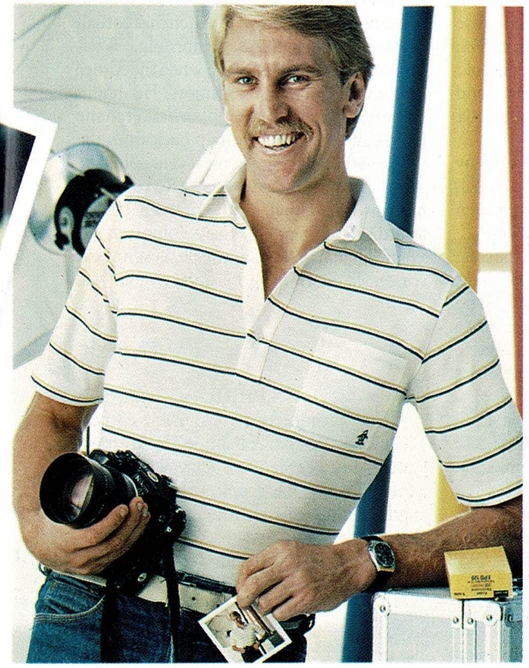
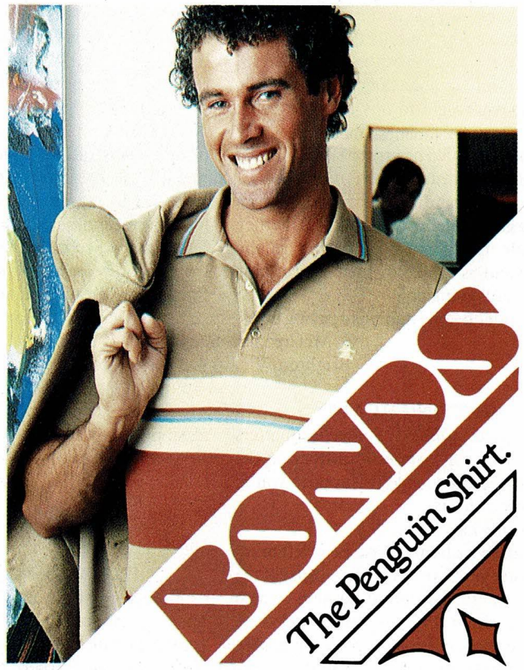


Wherever you go, they're the tops.







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THE PLAYBOY FORUM

a continuing dialogue on contemporary issues between playboy and its readers

THREE CHEERS

Before it is too late, how about three cheers for the Royal Navy. I know the Falklands business will probably be over by the time this is published and who knows, the Poms could have been thrashed — but I doubt it.

Whatever the outcome, those jolly jacktars will have done their job. Lots will be forever asleep in a watery grave, and others will be crippled. Many may not have even agreed with what they were doing — I doubt that too — but will still have done it. Because that's the job. Years of sitting around doing nothing and then a couple of days or only hours under fire. Life on the line. That's something that's always possible.

What other job has that risk?

These days we glorify the Rupert Murdochs and Holmes a Courts who risk just a tiny piece of their fortunes and make jokes about the blokes who are called upon to risk everything — their life. That's real bravery.

B. McT.,
Gerringong, NSW.

BLOWING A FUSE

I would like to know what happened to the Royal Commission or whatever it was into the motor car spare parts racket.

I've been waiting for some sort of price decrease and improvement in the business for three years now, but despite all the investigation it's still just as big a racket as before.

The other day I noticed one of my headlights was on the blink. It worked fine on high-beam, but was out on the low-beam.

Now I know you can't just buy the filament, you've got to buy a whole globe. But no! The wily Japanese made me buy a whole bloody sealed beam, for $9.75. All that for a couple of cents' worth of wire!

I can understand the car manufacturers trying to get as much money out of us as they can while the going's good, but if the Government is awake to their tricks, how come it's still going on?

No wonder people don't like paying taxes.

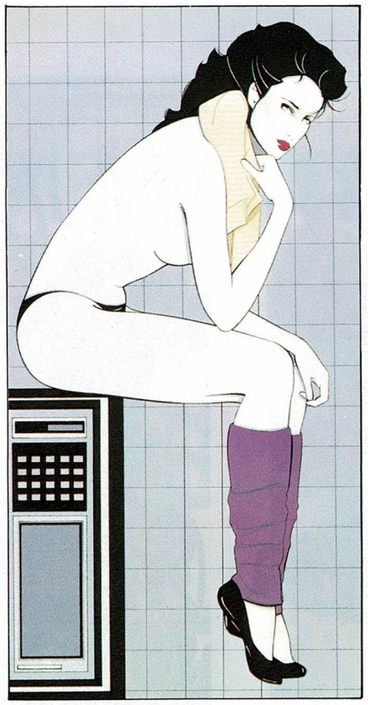
G. McCreedie,
Brighton, Vic.

GETTING HEAVY

Your article in June on Sydney's squatters was as good as any superficial story on the plight of the poor. I don't suppose you're into heavy analysis.

But let me have a go.

Why all those houses have been left to rot for so many years is essentially because of the collapse of the capitalist system which happened about 1974 — compounded by greedy developers exploiting a few mistakes by ill-equipped bureaucrats. Right?



Because there was a stack of money around at the start of the Seventies with nowhere to go, the banks and insurance companies and foreign rich guys invested heavily in real estate. This was the so-called productive use of capital the Establishment goes on and on about. All it did was tear down some fine old buildings, stick up a few ugly ones, and quadruple the price of land. How bloody productive.

Then Billy McMahon tried to get votes by bringing down an easy Budget (and they call him a great Treasurer) which brought even more money into the real estate market.

In the meantime, a pack of dills in the state bureaucracy had published some wild plans for superdeveloping Woolloomooloo, and the concrete-heads in Main Roads planned a superhighway. All these plans were found to be dumb — but not until millions of dollars had been squandered.

Finally, the arse fell out of the whole scam, a lot of ordinary people did their brass, and the inner city was left to the rats, drunks and lumpen proletariat.

"Comrade Bob",
(Name supplied),
Townsville, Qld.

EXORCISING DEVILS

Full credit to Australian PLAYBOY for opening its pages to the incisive and compassionate intellect of Xavier Herbert. Ten years ago Herbert might have been a small voice in the wilderness, but the progression of his sentiment from selectively read novels to something as far reaching as the PLAYBOY interview is proof positive of the changing attitude towards racial tolerance, the national identity and chauvinism.

However, on reading the interview I was left with an overriding impression of Herbert's apparent desire to divest himself of his own racial strain. Perhaps the homogenous Anglo-Saxon mix so dominant in Australia must bear the guilt for the genocide of the Aboriginal people, but surely the only way to offset the record is by disproving the theory that the white man is "a devil".

I'm convinced this is only possible through word and deed — not by wearing ash and sackcloth and repeating empty apologies. Surely the basis for a national identity rests with a justifiable self-confidence rather than a guilt complex.

J. Davis,
Hornsby, NSW.

UNREAL, MEN

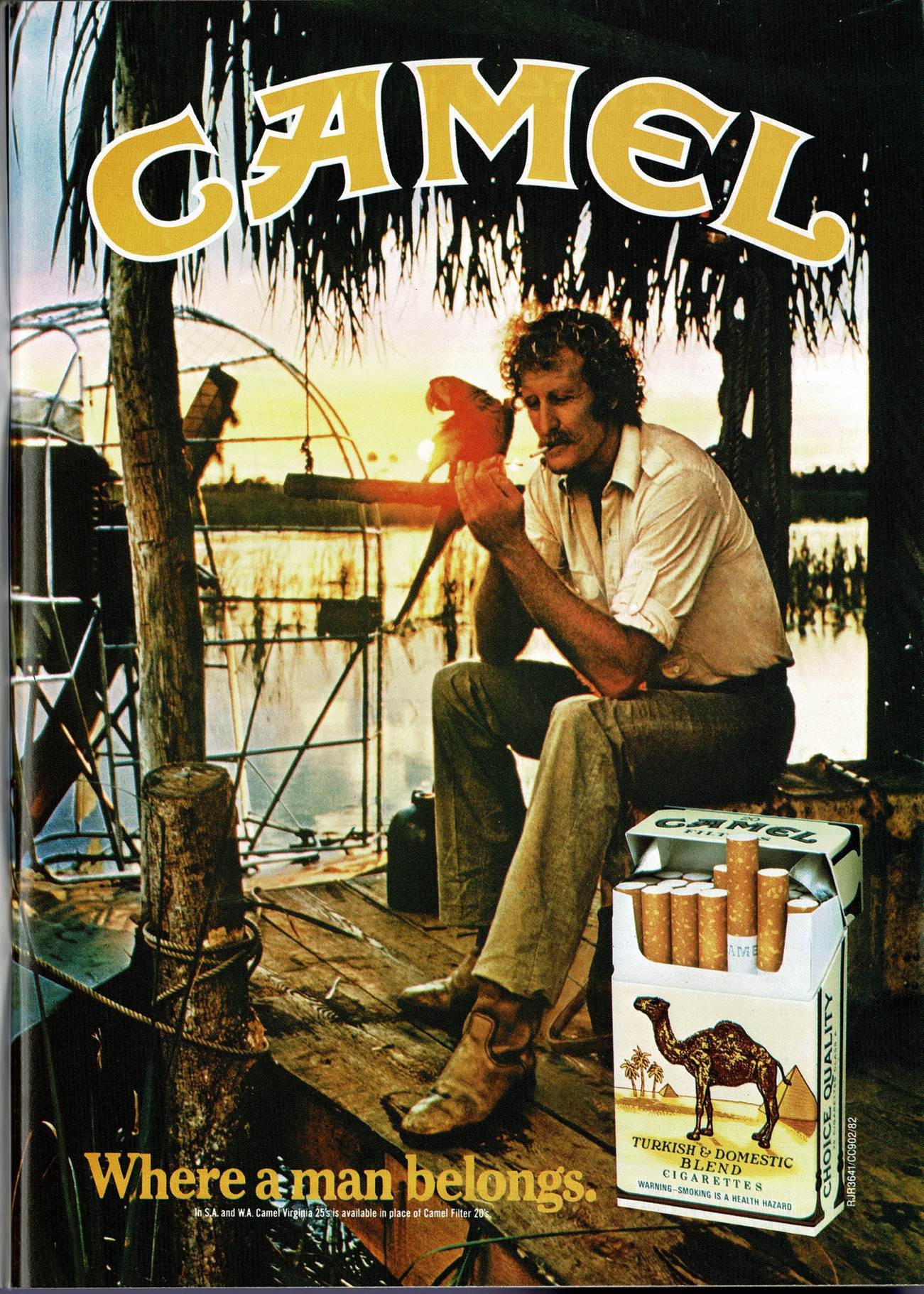
Nice to see Bruce Feirstein put it all back into proportion with Real Men Don't Eat Quiche (PLAYBOY, June). Today's Real Man could easily lose sight of priorities if he didn't stick to his principles. For instance, what should today's Real Man do when his lady says the lawn needs mowing? Why, he should show her how to change the plug in the mower so she won't have to disturb him when he's settling down to watch the football replays on any Sunday morning. What should today's Real Man do when the corner liquor store goes out of business? He should buy his lady a mobile shopping basket so she will be able to make the trip back from the supermarket with four dozen cans, plus the shopping. What should today's RM do when he wins his football club's best and fairest award? Nothing less than volunteer his "better half" to launder the jerseys for next season. Wouldn't life be dull without real men!

Ms A.M.,
Hawthorn, Vic.

IN PERIL

I read with interest your article entitled "The Perils of Paul & Pauline" by Durden-Smith and deSimone (PLAYBOY, June). Unfortunately the article contains several myths and semi-scientific gems of misinformation.

For example, the section called "Down In The Dumps". The authors assert that there is a basic biological reason why more women become depressed than men and the reason lies in the biochemistry of the brain — genes and hormones. They further state that "Psychological explanations of that sort of depression are useless and such treatment of



it is at least a waste of money and time". This is simply not true and flies in the face of all the most recent research. The facts are these:

(1) Most depression is of the so-called Reactive-Neurotic type—at least 80 percent of depression can be accounted for in terms of environmental factors. Endogenous depression usually of the more severe psychotic types account for about 15-20 percent of all depression seen by a psychologist or psychiatrist.

(2) Cognitive-Behavior therapies have proven to be the most effective types of treatment for about 70 percent of people suffering from depression (not to be confused with normal sadness which passes with time). The most recent studies by Beck, Young, Rush, Shaw, Emery in the US, and studies by Pead and Campbell in Australia, have demonstrated that these therapies are more effective than anti-depressant medication for about 70 percent of depressions (85 percent improvement for non-drug therapy vs. 60 percent for anti-depressants). The Americans are now spending some $4 million evaluating these therapies.

(3) No gene, despite the article's assertion, has been found as yet to account for depression in human beings, although certain types of depression run in families.

(4) Recent sensory deprivation studies and learned helplessness studies by Seligman, and studies of brain endorphines, have shown the psychological events produce changes in brain biochemistry. Consequently, severe so-called endogenous depression may be seen as the result of alteration in brain biochemistry following psycho-social stress.

The article in your magazine places too much emphasis on so-called innate biological differences in males and females and ignores psycho-social influences. A great deal of the resulting depression in females can easily be explained by cultural factors and not by sociobiology.

G. H. Pickworth,
Consulting Psychologist,
Brookvale, NSW.

MAN AND WOMAN

I have read with much interest each installment of your Man and Woman series. Informative, well-written articles like these are what makes your magazine worth buying.

I'm sure there are a lot of readers like me who now have a better understanding of themselves and their relationships because of this series.

Trying to fathom out what makes mankind tick has been a hobby of mine for some time, and although Man and Woman was obviously written in America, there were enough parallels to make deSimone and Durden-Smith's conclusions relevant to Australia.

As they point out, people are people no matter which country they were born in. Of course, social and cultural differences must be taken into account, but the differences between America and Australia must be minimal.

Perhaps now you could do a similar series (sexual preferences, for instance) researched wholly in this country. Meanwhile, keep the good stories coming.

A. Smithson,
South Melbourne, Vic.

LAUGH-IN

In a world of wars and woes, it's good to know I can rely on PLAYBOY to brighten me up each month, so I was doubly delighted with your July Magazine. I was still chuckling over Neil Jameson's story about The Real Frank De Groot when I turned to Alex O'Hara's cartoon send-up of That's Incredible! I'm still laughing.

K.B.,
Launceston, Tas.

BOYCOTT VIOLENCE

Well done PLAYBOY! I enjoyed your thought-provoking article on the Commonwealth Games which appeared in your June issue. I have been reading various media reports about the preparations for the Games and the anticipated trouble areas, but your article really helped to put everything into perspective.

When political and racial differences are allowed to enter the arena of sport, only disaster can occur and there's nothing exciting about bloodshed.

I don't see how anyone could agree with the Games Foundation employee who was quoted as saying that the threat of violence at the Games could make the whole thing more exciting. What bullshit! When political and racial differences are allowed to enter the arena of sport, only disaster can occur and there's nothing exciting about bloodshed.

Raymond McVeigh,
Nowra, NSW.

HERBERT HYPE

In reference to the Xavier Herbert interview (June), I don't wish to start a new controversy but will mention that I'm French-born, with social experience around the world (including Papua New Guinea) and have lived for 18 years with a colored wife, so I can hardly be classified among "British chauvinists and racists" generally opposed to Xavier Herbert (according to him).

As the gentleman had "black girls in bed", why did he not marry one? I agree with him about brutality to Aborigines, but the author of *Poor Fellow My Country* (I never did manage to finish it), appears to forget that Cairns Police Union complained recently that they did not know of one policeman (including Aborigines) from Yarrabah Reserve who had not been assaulted or hospitalised during the last nine years.

And finally, why was our great Australian democrat the only lecturer to refuse a question time for members of the audience at the Cairns World Wilderness Congress two years ago?

J. Huon,
Atherton, Qld.

TWICE AS NICE

Kym Malin in your July issue is the most delectable girl I've seen in your pages for a long time. She's twice as nice as the US Playmate of the Year who is pale and washed out and has an ugly mouth (yes, some of us look at faces too).

I personally prefer blondes but I wonder what your other readers' preferences are? Your July issue featured a blonde on the cover and three blondes in the pictorials. All the brunette fanciers got was Fifi and her pearls.

George,
(Name supplied)
Sans Souci, NSW.

INSIDE INFO

I just wanted to say that I enjoyed reading Brian McLaughlin's poem in July Forum.

My husband is also in jail and I know that he enjoys reading PLAYBOY every month: it's a magazine that helps him to fantasise and also to keep up with what's happening in the arts, literature, cars, sport and the community in general.

Thank you PLAYBOY. You're miles ahead of the rest.

D.L.P.,
South Melbourne, Vic.

ARRESTING LADIES

I've never seen a lady cop who looks even remotely as glamorous as patrolwoman Barbara Schantz (July). Maybe it's the sexless uniforms and dilly hats that our ladies in the police force and armed services are forced to wear. Barbara even looks arresting in her black patrol uniform and perky cap.

C'mon you girls in uniform, how about putting your feet down and demanding more attractive gear?

Morris Knight,
Fremantle, WA.

"The Playboy Forum" offers the opportunity for an extended dialogue between readers and editors of this publication on contemporary issues. Address all correspondence to The Playboy Forum, PO Box 746, Darlinghurst 2010.

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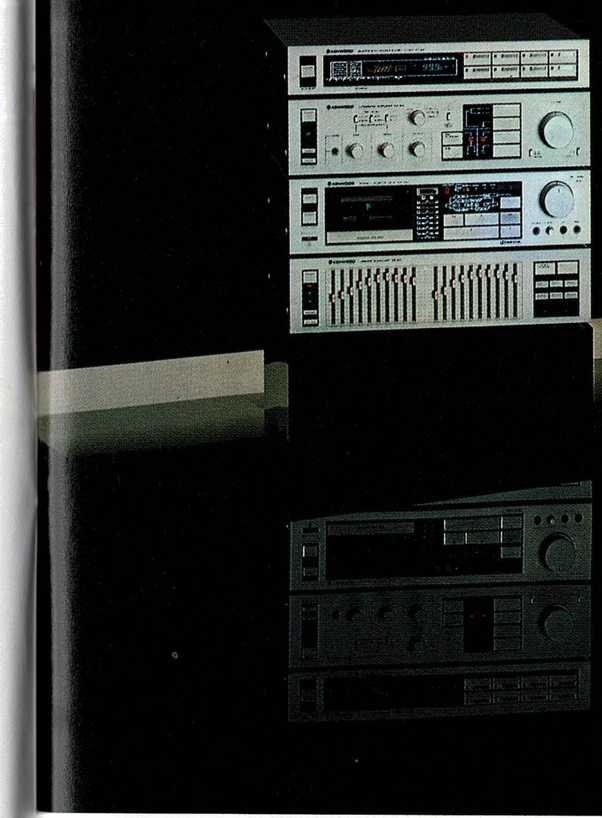

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MOVIES

As the story goes, a man and a woman once met on the dance floor of one of those desperate singles resorts in the States. He said: "I'm only here for the weekend." She replied: "I'm dancing as fast as I can." American novelist Barbara Gordon chose the line as the title of her biography of drug addiction and now, *I'm Dancing As Fast As I Can* comes to the screen as a Valiumania jangling with neurotic energy.

It's the old fighting-adversity-all-the-way-to-the-brink melodrama, this time set on the ragged frontiers of the diazepam society. Barbara Gordon (Jill Clayburgh) is an award-winning documentary maker working on a film about a woman dying of cancer.

Miss Gordon is successful, respected and in love, but she is one of the ducks on the millpond of life. . .serene and assured on the surface and paddling like hell underneath.

Riddled with anxieties that she attempts to cover up, she becomes the victim of a Valium dependancy that reaches 60mg a day before she decides to take the cold turkey way out. The abrupt withdrawal collapses the whole flimsy pedestal on which she has been envied. Suddenly we're in the high hanky-rating world of Cuckoos' Nests and the whole audience is rooting for brave Barbara in her bid to genuinely become the person that everyone always thought her to be.

Returning to her documentary, Barbara visits the dying cancer patient in hospital, and it is she who suggests a new ending for the film. "How about I come back from the dead? After all, you did."

Squelching out through the tear-soaked tissues, it might well appear to you that the relevance of this movie should have been its anti-Valium message. But it's so damned harrowing and distraught, it ends up saying that if you're on them, don't consider trying to get off. The conspicuous success of the production is Jill Clayburgh — God, how she's suffered on the screen — who manages to remain convincing in both vixen and vulnerable personas. When it comes to conveying inner turmoil, Ms Clayburgh makes you so tense they could flog Valium at the lolly counter.

●

Its rave at both the Cannes and London Festivals last year, demands a commercial release here for *Smash Palace,* the latest offering from New Zealand director Roger Donaldson.

His first feature, *Sleeping Dogs,* alerted us to Donaldson's considerable talent and already there's an identifiable original style about his work.

Presumably based on an actual New Zealand news story, *Smash Palace* derives its title from a towing and repair yard that has become something of an obsession with main character Al Shaw (Bruno Lawrence). His wife, Jacqui (Anna Jemison), reasonably expects that they are bound for something brighter than his dad's old salvage yard, but Al is happy to hang around its familiar territory tinkering with his race car. Their incompatible aspirations lead to the inevitable split, embittered by the genuine affection they have for their seven-year-old daughter, Georgie.

Action and suspense accelerate rapidly when the aggressive but sensitive Al defies a court order and abducts his daughter. Director Donaldson displays all the throttle control of race-crazy Al, feathering his story through the grim inevitability of the domestic disintegration, then stepping on the gas and leading us on a merry chase all the way to a final twist that hits the audience like a punch to the solar plexus.

Smash Palace has moments that are intimate, hilarious, harrowing, heartwarming and almost impossibly suspenseful. Donaldson's film-making almost shadow boxes with vitality, and his eye for material and location puts him alongside Peter Weir as the likely lads of Down Under cinema.

●

The myth and legend surrounding Elvis Presley weave a pretty confused tapestry, so Malcolm Leo and Andrew Solt go for straight eulogy with their docu-drama *This Is Elvis*. There's something distasteful about the way promoters are queueing up to exhume Elvis for just one last box office killing, but this effort steers an inoffensive course with Elvis' manager Colonel Tom Parker watching over it as technical adviser. The warts are there, too, which gives the film a degree of authority, but the real success is the cohesive manner in which the directors have melded documentary footage with dramatisation. Well, from a technical angle, anyway. The real success, as always, is The King himself gyrating through more than 30 of his immortal hits. There's no disguising the producers' intention to worship Presley, but so what. . . we come to praise Elvis not to bury him.

●

If you're at all troubled by your growing dependence on PLAYBOY — or if you're starting to skip the words — the National Film Board of Canada offers 68 minutes and 40 seconds of therapy with its pornography documentary, *Not A Love Story,* currently screening around Australia.

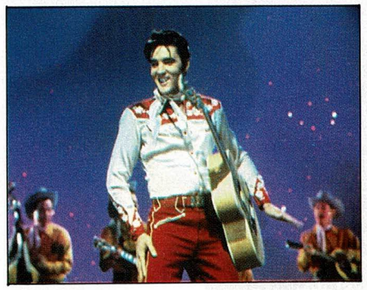
If it is not totally objective, it just might be because it is produced by the National Film Board's Studio D, which is a forum for feminist film-makers. Consequently, the recurring conclusion is that women's liberation has left us so emasculated, it's only fantasies of woman that stop us from disappearing altogether.

As a documentary, it both informs and stimulates argument, which are two pluses, but it also stumbles on a couple of hurdles that it builds for itself. The concept is wincingly corny. . . a feminist film-maker and a Montreal stripper set out to explore the sleazy underworld of peep shows, stag movies and sex supermarkets. What they see converts the stripper, and both end up in the disinfecting atmosphere of a squeaky clean beach, hugging and sobbing.

Its second problem is in drawing the distinction between eroticism and pornography, and then not being able to recognise one from the other. The film does ask questions in some interesting places. Centrespread photographer Suze Randall has her say, as does David Wells, publisher of several of Canada's men's entertainment magazines, plus a couple of strippers and performers. But then it's over to feminists Kate Millett, Robin Morgan, Kathleen Barry, Susan Griffin and Margaret Atwood for the passion play approach.

Around the world, PLAYBOY and *Penthouse* outsell *Time* and *Newsweek* we are told. . . which would suggest to me that community standards have embraced them. Ah, but the Famous Five know better. *Not A Love Story* does contain some sexually explicit scenes, but certainly not gratuitously. As a forum for discussion it is probably pretty potent. As a catalyst for social change, it is flaccid.

— ROBIN INGRAM



The King lives on. . .

. . .*and* Not A Love Story *is not totally objective.*

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BOOKS

When the ascent of man caught him at the stage where he had struggled off his haunches to a basic upright position, the concept of natural selection worked wonders. Basically, it was a case of boy meeting girl, the pair adjourning to the nearest cave or thicket, rutting like fury for a while and then returning to the chores of survival. In due course she fell pregnant, and so the chain continued. No real difference to most other beasts in the animal kingdom.

Fortunately, or unfortunately, the ascent of man soared on and on, until the 20th Century finds him almost bending over backwards in his desire to stand more upright than his predecessor. A by-product of the ascent has been an inclination to explore the self. This has prospered to an extent where such a basic act as the rut in the scrub has become a bigger production than the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.

In the interests of this know-thyself quest, psychologist Dr Tony Lake has furnished *Test Your Sexuality* (Rigby). An exhaustive study in self-analysis, the book's aim is to expose the sexual nature of the individual so that he or she might avoid the misunderstandings, suspicions, ego alleys and, presumably, all the bad fucks.

Lake's course on getting to know thyself takes the student on a road test of his own body to observe exactly what turns him on.

In accompanying questionnaires he picks at the fabric of one's sexual nature, and on a score basis with accompanying explanations, offers a profile of the sexual individual. The obvious conclusion might be that you discover you're not sexually compatible with your wife or girlfriend and decide to do something about it. On the other hand, if you're completely satisfied with your relationship, reading this book just might upset your nest.

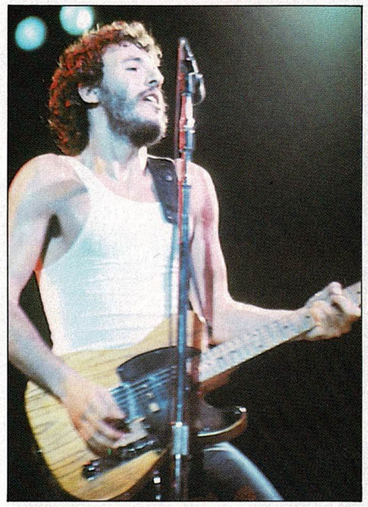
To a vast core of guys who see most kinds of sex with a female as nothing but good, the book will seem irrelevant. To those who can afford to be ultra selective, it just might be prescribed reading.

•

Anyone who still doubts the validity of rock and roll's claim as a contributor to 20th Century culture should be force-fed a few chapters of *The Book Of Rock Lists* (Rolling Stone Press), by Dave Marsh and Kevin Stein.

Here, in 600-plus pages of inspired trivia, is a round-up of every superlative applicable to the rock form. Marsh, fine writer that he is, has trimmed his text to the minimum, preferring to let the listings relate the hills and hollows of rock's bumpy history.

The lists fall into two distinct categories: statistical fact and pure opinion. In the fact department, look for the obvious, like Artists With 10 or More Gold Albums. Happily, rock is a bit more exciting than statistics allow, and opinions from the likes of Timothy Leary and Frank Zappa (a blank sheet for his 10 favorite rock critics) depict the art's alternative image.



Items thrown onstage at a Bruce Springsteen concert are among the listings in The Book Of Rock Lists.

The authors have pursued a route made apparent by the preface dedication to a hard-nosed statistician — researcher Rick Whitesell — and a grand eccentric — Keith Moon. Between the two extremes falls everything splendid, superb, shocking or just plain stupid about the rock culture.

At one end of the scale runs a listing of Items Thrown Onstage at Bruce Springsteen's Madison Square Garden Concert (it includes a rubber duck), and at the other stands a whole chapter dedicated to plotting rock's somewhat suspect history.

The authors' commitment to research is exemplary, but it is their nomination of categories, and the people enlisted to compile them, which make the work inspired reading. Onan's Greatest Hits (the 25 greatest songs about masturbation), Jim Morrison's Arrest Record, the 10 Most Spectacular Deaths (Johnny Ace, who died backstage in 1954 while playing Russian roulette, gets top billing), or the 12 Fattest Rock Stars (Elvis rates a jersey) chart the real story. Contributors include Truman Capote, Ray Manzarek (from the Doors), Carl Perkins, John Sebastian, Alice Cooper, David Bromberg, Max Weinberg (E Street Band), Eddie Cochran, Michael Ochs; and opinions have been culled from the fields of promotion, radio, recording, touring, dope and death.

If opened at random, *The Book Of Rock Lists* is the complete trivia turn-on and, at the same time, one of the genre's most informative and readable references.

— NEIL JAMESON

•

How much pain can you take? When the body's broken and bloodied, and the skull's been split open by repeated blows, and for every moment of life the controlling emotion, over-ruling even hunger, is fear — the will must be strong indeed to even continue existence. Under constant terror, deprivation and torture, how long can the will itself survive?

A story of just such survival is *The Tunnel,* by Andre Lacaze (Corgi, 1982), a translation from the French about the horrors of a Nazi work-camp. Several hundred men were used as slaves to construct a tunnel through the mountain range that is the border between Austria and Yugoslavia — a strategic tunnel to provide swift access to the Adriatic for the Panzer tanks.

To begin with, 300 prisoners were selected from the death camp of Mauthausen in Austria to make up the "kommando" at Loibl Pass. The guards were the vicious SS, and the wardens, ex-prisoners themselves, were perverted and sadistic criminals recruited from German civil prisons. These mostly French and Polish captives were beaten at random and forced to work 14 hours a day on a bowl of watery soup and a crust of bread.

The novel's central character is Paulo Chastagnier, a ballsy, young petty-crim of 23 from Paname (Paris). He had been busted originally for trying to sell phony tungsten on the black market to a Belgian who had turned out to be a Nazi agent. Street-wise and prison-wise, but far too cocky for his own good, he cops many a bashing. His disgust with the traitors and crawlers becomes tempered by a growing admiration for the Resistance and Communist prisoners who go sensibly and quietly, organising, boosting morale.

Initially, escape cannot be contemplated: the slightest misdemeanor can result in pointless death, like the execution for "sabotage" of a hunger-crazed Pole who spilt soup on himself. The men soon realise that survival depends on building the tunnel.

Lacaze was there at Loibl Pass; was a Resistance fighter, trice-medalled for it. I became conscious of an old man telling of a terrible time in a hard, tough youth. But tell it, he must.

The supreme irony is that the tunnel is still there today. Widened and improved, it provides easy access for German tourists to a ski resort, built on the very mountain that once overlooked the camp.

— PETER CULAINN

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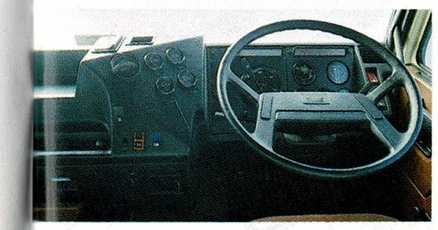

The first is fuel.

Over-revving, or letting the engine labour, burns fuel far in excess of what is necessary.

The second is component wear. Revving or labouring places extra stress on components and, obviously, extra wear.

If you see a driver hanging out of his cab with one hand on the wheel, one eye on the road and one ear on the exhaust stack, chances are he is using the old method of picking the right engine speed.

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One driver we know is changing to a Volvo because he has worked out he will save $250 a trip on his regular Brisbane-Melbourne run.

Apart from the cost in money, the old-fashioned method has had a high cost in human efficiency. Most drivers who use the method have suffered some kind of hearing damage.

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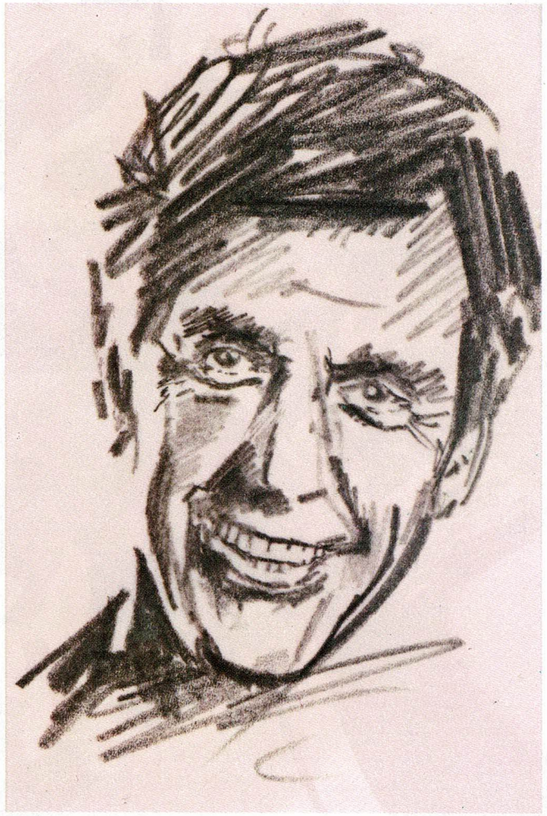


To begin this show we will cross to James Wolcott in New York, who is by way of being the television critic for the mildly radical and vastly profitable weekly magazine, *Village Voice,* owned, incidentally, by Rupert Murdoch.

While performing his onerous duties, Wolcott found himself looking at *The Don Lane Show,* which was being screened in New York at the unusual hour of one am.

One can imagine his astonishment. He was possibly in innocent pursuit of an old John Wayne movie, or even an early copy of *The Streets Of San Francisco,* when, lo and behold, his screen was filled with a tall, skinny figure speaking in an unmistakable Brooklyn accent on a program recorded in some goddamned place called Mellburn.

Maybe he consulted his copy of the New York edition of *TV Guide* to ensure he had not accidentally tuned into an obscure horror movie or an extract from the Theatre of the Absurd, such was the nightmare unfolding before him.

But he obviously watched it. And later, possibly still in a state of shock, he wrote: "*The Don Lane Show* is one of the tackiest talk shows of all time. . . his questions aren't textured by brush-ups with the real world — he seems to have spent his entire life in a phone booth waiting for his agent to call."

Lane was "a shallow interviewer. . . whose speciality is nudge, nudge, wink-wink prurience. . . There are also toothy crooners in gold chains and spiffy boots doing bang-up Vegas numbers on sets that look as if they've been left over from some small-town beauty pageant."

I've taken the liberty of quoting an American critic because it's not a bad thing to hear a fresh view on the subject of Don Lane. As it turns out, the American critic has but echoed what Australian critics have been saying for years.

How many years? God, I don't know, it seems as if Lane has been around forever, trying to interview, trying to sing, trying to be amusing, at the same time waving his ego before the cameras like it was a banner at a testimonial dinner.

Yet Lane becomes tetchy if his performance is questioned, especially his remarkable interviewing technique. "After eight years I must be doing something right," he told a reporter earlier this year.

Not necessarily so. I have watched some recent Lane shows and can only conclude that, like the Bourbons, he has learned nothing and forgotten nothing. He stumbles over the questions. He forgets salient points. He wanders from the subject. He asks questions so crass he makes the viewer cringe. And he seems to think the way to draw out those intimate replies so craved by interviewers is to stroke his guests. Lane cannot keep his hands off those who, either voluntarily or for the promotion of their coming theatrical performances, agree to appear on his program.

"And (stroke, stroke) what do you (stroke, stroke) think of (stroke, stroke) Australian audiences?" That sort of thing. It must be extremely irritating to the guest.

He did it with Grace Jones. I stayed up quite late to see Lane interview the black American entertainer in the hope he would extract something more than the usual trivia. But he grabbed and stroked and asked questions that could only be described as fawning.

The pity is that Lane has access, sometimes through the extremely expensive process of a satellite link-up, to some of the world's more interesting personalities. They must pinch themselves with disbelief when Lane's questions come bouncing through the heavens.

Oddly, the studio audience appears to enjoy Lane's bumbling. . . if the applause, the laughter, the gasps can be taken as approval.

Of course, it's free entertainment for those keen enough to travel to the old baked beans factory in Richmond, Melbourne, which houses Channel Nine's operations. It's something to do with the night; it would be churlish not to applaud and laugh and gasp. One thing I'll say for Lane, he knows how to play to his studio audience and, presumably, to those at home, because his ratings are usually reasonable enough to ensure a new contract when the time comes. He knows (or his producer knows) that his audience consists largely of those who treat every word in *Women's Weekly* as gospel, who consider Andrew Peacock a global statesman and who believe in the three-card tricksters who do quite nicely, thank you, from the nonsense generally known as psychic phenomena. Lane's show is a haven for cranks. They come out of the woodwork to appear: all the numerologists, interpreters of tea leaves, failed ghost hunters, flying saucer nuts, fortune tellers and those who have made a successful career out of fooling a lot of the people all the time with ESP.

Lane revels in these characters. He even takes them seriously and is sorely affronted by any suggestion they could be frauds. James Randi proved this when he appeared on *The Don Lane Show.* Randi is an American magician and a psychic sceptic, a man well respected around the world for his part in exposing such sleight-of-hand merchants as Uri Geller.

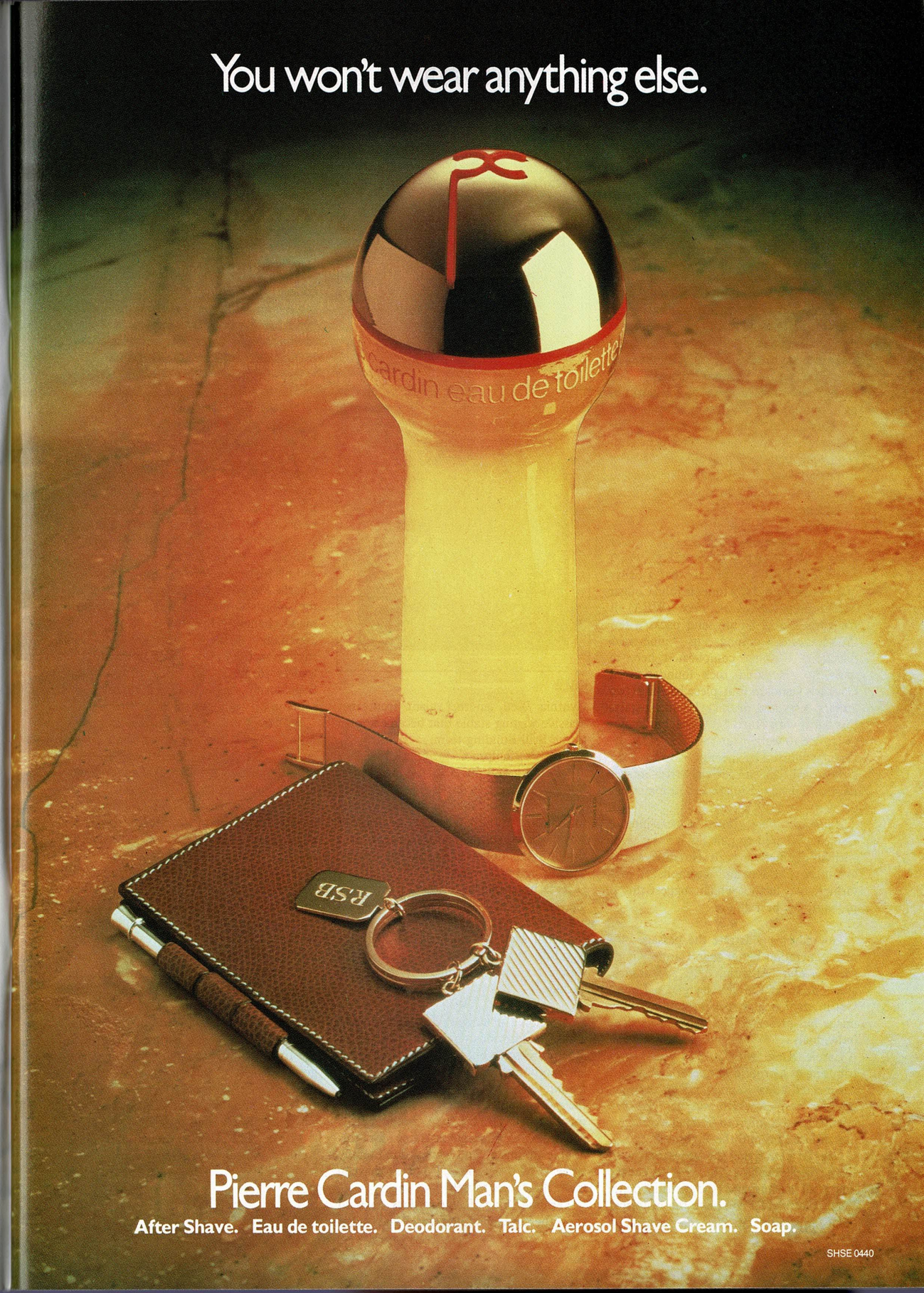
In all innocence, Randi appeared on the show to debunk the legends surrounding the so-called psychics, including those who profess to be able to find water by holding a piece of wire or a twig in their hands. Showing all the couth of an illiterate hick, Lane turned on Randi and abused the bejeezus out of him, then walked off in anger.

In a few brief moments, Lane showed that he wasn't to be taken seriously.

But his show goes on.

It seems to me that, like the Australian cricket team, it's easier to stay in the side than gain a new place through talent.

— NEAL AKERMAN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The Jam's often frenetic, loose-jointed style has its detractors, but that is bound to be a by-product of any act which refuses to walk the strict commercial line. *The Gift* (Polydor) finds the boys five years down the road from when they first tumbled out of Woking to hit London in the punk/new wave tide. Thick skins and perseverance meant it was hard for critics to make the tags stick and when The Jam refused to fold in accordance with numerous out-of-the-blue new wave bands, their music became readily identifiable.

When Adam Ant said fans want romance and escapism to get them out of these times, The Jam wasn't listening. Town Called Malice confronts the urban nightmare in all its ugly trappings and shouts to "put some joy back in this town called malice". The Planners' Dream Goes Wrong is uncompromisingly political and the power of its protest suggests bands like The Jam and The Clash are really the protest acts of the new order.

●

It might have taken Pat Benatar and her version of I Need A Lover (Who Won't Drive Me Crazy) to reveal what a ballsy crafter of rock and roll tunes is John Cougar Mellencamp. *American Fool* (WEA) is Cougar's fourth album, and packs a few thunderheads among its nine-track selection. Nothing complicated here to mess up the solid rock foundation of Cougar's standard four-piece backing (two guitars, bass and drums). He jump starts this outfit with Hurts So Good, but knows just when to feather the throttle before the vision is blurred by sheer pace. Cougar has a theatrical flair and his city street images have a flint-edged toughness to match his delivery.

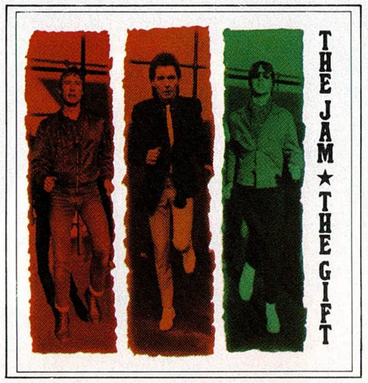
American Fool finds a less-intense Cougar prepared to pair his writing skills with his distinctive vocals. He comes across as a more confident and accomplished performer, two factors which suggest this is probably his best album.

●

Few albums illustrate the passage of a rock generation better than Carole King's *One To One* (Atlantic). The appearance, albeit brief, of Carole's daughter, Louise Goffin, depicts how rock music's maturing image has preserved the status of its finer individuals.

Carole King, with 20-odd years' contributing as a prolific composer and singer, has erected a few monuments on the way, not the least of which was her *Tapestry* album. It's a comfort to find her excellence has endured on into the Eighties.

One To One spans the generation with King re-establishing the near-legendary link with ex-husband and writing mate, Gerry Goffin. To complete the historical scope, the title cut was co-penned by



Cynthia Weil, another giant from that massive writing stable that became known as the Brill Building team.

Carole's foolproof formula puts her vocals and grand piano out front of a tight but never overstated backing. The only significant departures from the spartan formula are on It's A War and Life Without Love, where a six-man horn section brasses through the hollows; and Little Prince, embellished by strings.

King has seen the inside of a few more studios than most and her co-production work with Mark Hallman pinpoints an ear for detail. Hallman must take the credit for a subtle and often quirky approach to Carole's support, particularly the vocal backing.

— NEIL JAMESON

●

We don't usually review compilation albums of previously released material for obvious reasons, but now and then there is an exception to the rule. *Molly's Aus. Evolution* (Summit) is one. Thirty-two of the most popular Australian rock songs of the past decade have been chosen by Mr Meldrum of *Countdown* fame for this double album set, and while I don't totally agree with his selections, I'd hate to have to make the choice myself.

The one thing *Evolution* does do is to show the huge amount of world-class talent that has been produced by a country with such a small population. I won't waste space listing the tracks on this well-packaged set — let me just say that it's got a good beat, you can dance to it, and I give it a 10.

— CAROL ASHDOWN

●

Sometimes you wonder what becomes of the names from the past. Mostly there's two ways they can go — stagnation on the college and small club circuit, where their reputation as stalwarts of countless backing bands or as names long remembered from ancient sleeve notes, ensures a small but enthusiastic turnout. Or the funk scene, where the money starts flowing, but the music stops.

Thankfully, trumpeters Ira Sullivan and Red Rodney have gambled on another path. In September last year they went to New York and cut *Spirit Within,* their first date together since 1955, and turned in a convincing album of modern New York music: clean, precise, well-constructed, sometimes exciting, always interesting jazz.

The project owes a great debt to pianist Garry Dial. He penned four of the six tunes, and his piano leads the ensemble in the way Charlie Mingus' bass used to, underpinning the soloists and signalling key tempo and mood changes. His work is helped by an extremely efficient but free-wheeling rhythm section, who cook up a storm for the leaders to spice with their trumpet and flugelhorn lines. (Sullivan doubles on soprano sax on three tracks as well.)

Best tracks are on side 2. Ira Sullivan's Monday Dance, with Sullivan and Rodney on the softer, fuller-toned flugelhorn, is a mid-tempo swinger that allows the leaders to exchange runs and feed off each other in the best jazz tradition. Two tones are apparent here, Rodney's more vital, attacking style riding above the more considered lines of Sullivan. Pianist Dial drops in a McCoy Tynerish break, all block chords and insistence, and bassist Jay Anderson contributes a typically forceful solo, (throughout the album his playing is superb), before the horns break in again to lift the tune to a hard blowing crescendo.

Crescent City closes the album with some boppish ensemble blowing and hard chasing, and another great solo from Anderson. It's a fast workout that seems best to suit the players' natural style. And in the final analysis, as Art Pepper says, you gotta swing and be honest. You get the feeling sometimes on *Spirit Within* that these guys should just blow, blow, blow, the way they always used to.

If you like Woody Shaw and Dave Leibman, check out *Spirit Within.*

— MATT DICKSON

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BOOZE

THERE'S an old Russian joke about an army recruit at base camp. When the hapless lad arrives, he is immediately questioned by the induction officer.

"Do you smoke, Ivanov?"

"Yes."

"Then stop immediately.

"Are you susceptible to the charms of women?"

"Yes."

"That is to stop, too.

"Do you drink vodka?"

"Yes."

"Cease the habit at once. Are you prepared to die for your country?"

"Of course, what is there left to live for!"

Despite the thoughts of the Russian army, or perhaps it is in spite of it, vodka is one of the most widely consumed spirits in the world today. Ironically the name means "little water", but apart from a superficial surface resemblance all similarity ends there.

A drink that has been used for centuries to help combat the rigors of Russian winters needs to be strong stuff. Traditionally served ice-cold in small glasses and tossed back in one go, the high alcoholic content of vodka made it as highly prized for the fiery physical sensations it produced as for its taste.

Modern vodka is basically a pure neutral grain spirit whose original terrifying proof has been reduced by the addition of distilled water. The so-called friend of the closet lunch-time drinker because it leaves little odor on the breath, its lack of a distinctive flavor has lead some to unfairly call it the spiritless spirit. It is very difficult to wax lyrical over marvellous nuances of flavor, as one can do with brandy or whisky, but neutrality of taste is the main reason behind vodka's immense success in the West.

Although the USSR is the world's largest producer of spirits (mostly in the form of vodka), vodka is now made all over the world, including Australia. In Turkey they make it from sugar beets, from corn and sorghum in the US, and Israel has even come up with a kosher version.

The base material — be it potatoes, sugar beets or grains — from which vodka is produced is not terribly important, although grains have acquired the most respectability.

The proof at which vodka is distilled is so high that the congeners, the technical term for the residual flavors which contribute so much to the taste of whisky and brandy, are not present in the water-white liquid produced by the vodka still.

Even in some quite reputable books you can still read that vodka is a drink primarily produced from potatoes. But the potato is now mainly reserved for a small number of specialist vodkas. Throughout its long history vodka has been distilled from a wide variety of ingredients, the ultimate choice often depending simply on what was most readily available in quantity. Products which easily yield natural sugars, such as molasses, potatoes, fruits and even grapes, have all been used at some time or another. Nowadays, however, most vodkas are produced from grains, the quality of the vodka being closely tied to the quality of the grain. Rye, corn, sorghum and sometimes barley are the ones most favored.

The original idea behind the "pure" rectification of vodka was to produce a strong liquor that would not freeze easily. Alcohol has a much lower freezing point than water, and that is why the proof of many vodkas is so high.

The basic fermented grain mash used in the manufacture of vodka is distilled twice and then put through a painstaking process of filtering through activated charcoal to cleanse and purify it. Most vodka is distilled at a very high proof of 190 American, and then distilled water is added to lower it to bottling strength.

The standard strength of vodka is 80 American proof (65 British), but certain brands are as high as 90 and 100 American proof (75 and 80 British) and must be clearly marked on the bottle.

As with Scotch, the water used in the manufacture of vodka is of prime importance as it greatly affects the final taste of the spirit.

For the layman, judging the quality of vodka isn't easy or obvious. Price is often a good indication, but the consensus of informed opinion seems to be that the only real, if rather general, assessment of the quality of vodka is that it should look somewhat oily when you pour it into a glass. Reputations are another invaluable guide, too.

The vodka produced in Western countries is considerably different from that of Russia and Poland — the other Eastern European country where vodka reigns supreme and which produces some of the world's finest and best known varieties. Polish and Russian vodkas often have a definite spirit-type flavor, heavier "bodies" and are more oily.

The most famous mixed drinks using vodka are: Bloody Mary — a blend of vodka, tomato juice and seasonings. Black Russian — a mixture of vodka and coffee liqueur which a dash of lemon turns into a Black Magic. Harvey Wallbanger — vodka, orange juice and Galliano. Screwdriver — part vodka, part orange juice. Moscow Mule — a tall drink of vodka, lime and ginger ale whose kick gets even stronger as you up the amount of vodka. And nationalists might also be interested in a liquid Kangaroo of two parts vodka, one part dry vermouth and a twist of lemon served on the rocks.

Just as there is no need to use a high-priced vodka in mixed drinks, there is also no need to use a high proof one either — 80 percent proof is quite high enough.

Vodka often has an insidious way of creeping up on you before you realise it, so if you do decide to use a 100 proof, it's only fair to warn drinkers beforehand.

Nazdarovie! — ELISABETH KING

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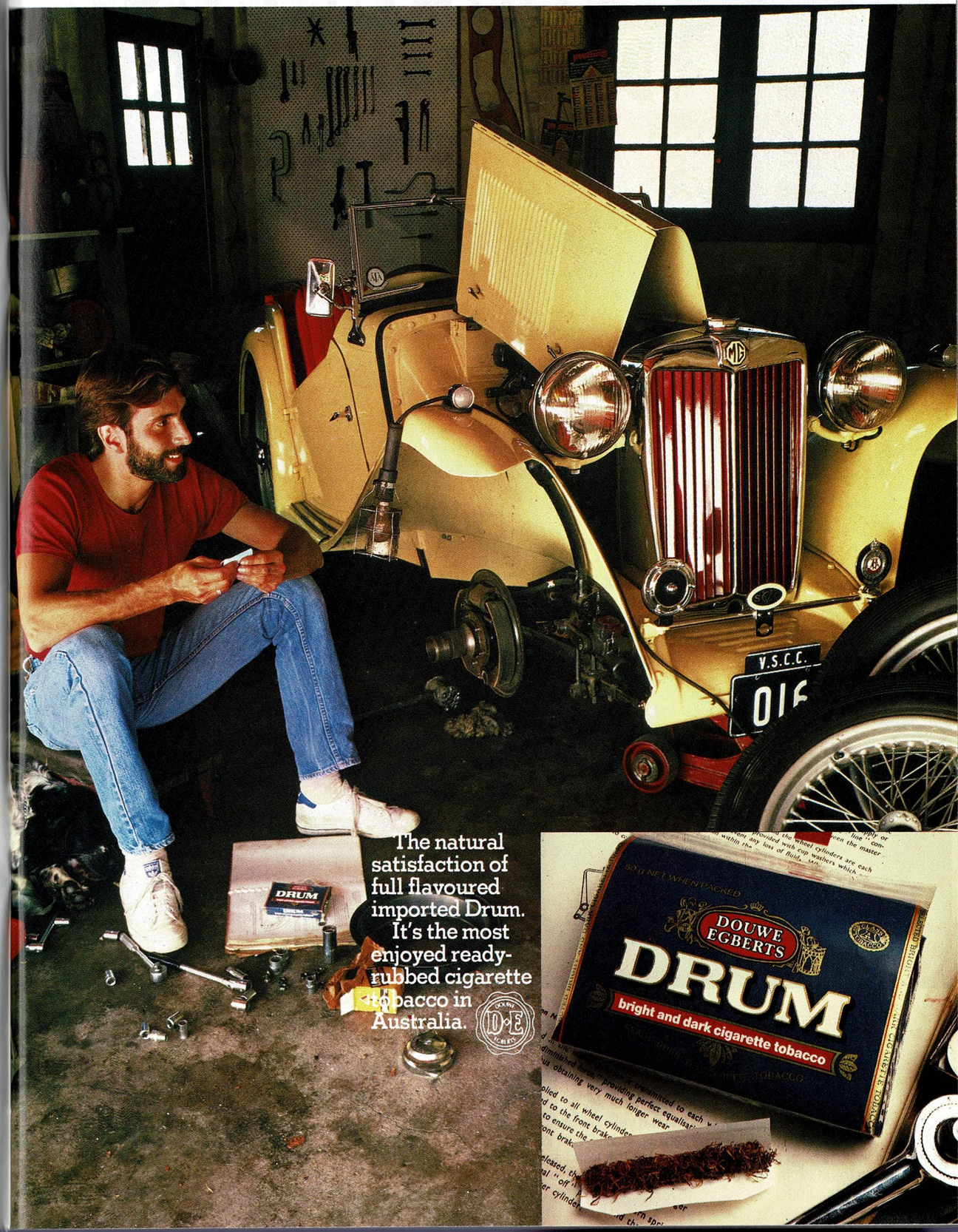
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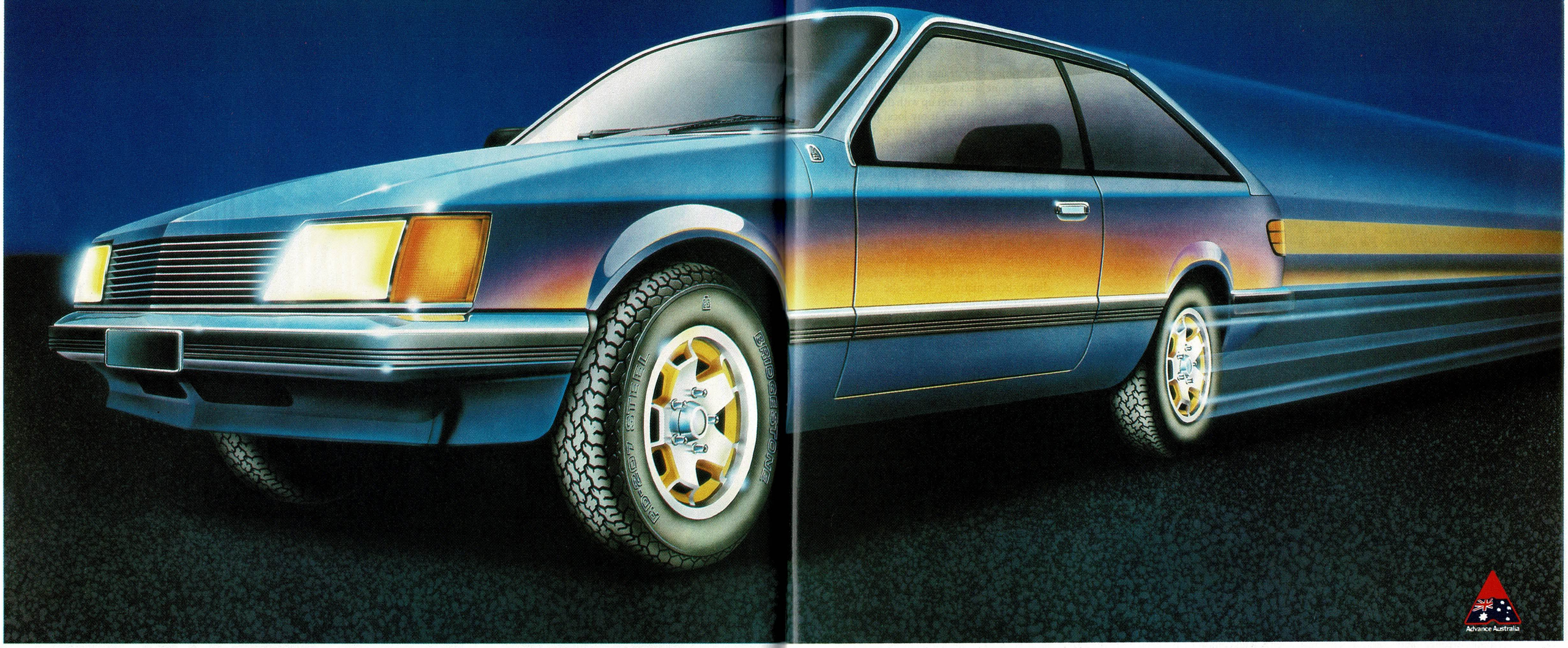

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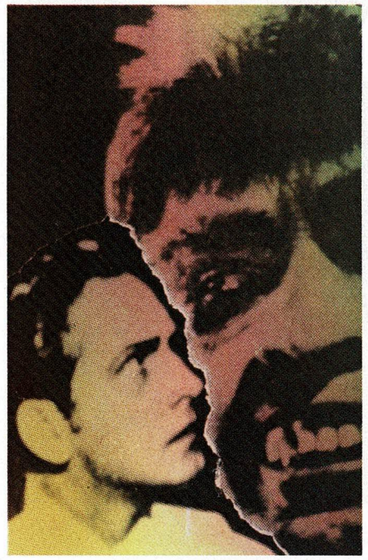
THE PLAYBOY ADVISER

questions about today's lifestyles are answered by our experts

I wonder if you could help me talk my husband out of a wild plan that he has. A few months ago he bought a 20-foot fibreglass "trailer-sailer" type yacht. He'd never done any sailing before, but has now become so keen that he is talking of trying to sail this yacht right around Australia. What's more, he wants me to come with him. Though I know next to nothing about sailing, it seems to me that such a small yacht is best suited to harbor sailing, and that such a trip would be very dangerous. He says that as he plans to stay close to the coast all the way around, it should be reasonably safe. Do you think the idea is as crazy as I do, and if so, how do you suggest I go about talking him out of it? — K.T., Vic.

While we would not wish to discourage anyone from having a spirit of adventure, it certainly sounds as if your husband is being a little unrealistic in his plan. A 20-foot trailer sailer will be of light displacement, and is certainly not designed for heavy conditions. And while it is true that people have completed very difficult voyages in even less suitable craft, they have needed a great deal of experience and skill to do so. For a sailor with as little experience as your husband, to consider such a voyage is downright foolhardy.



don't jump to hasty conclusions about his behavior

A few months ago my husband went interstate on a business trip, and while he was away, I think he had some sort of affair. I have no real proof, but I found a photo of a strange girl in a pocket of his coat, and just after he came back somebody phoned STD a couple of times but hung up the phone when I answered. I tried questioning him about it, but he wouldn't say anything. The real problem is that since shortly after the trip, he's been incredibly depressed, so I'm wondering if whatever it was he had going came to an unhappy end. Now he just mopes around all the time, doesn't seem interested in anything, and is becoming very slovenly in his appearance, as if he no longer cares about life. We've only had sex a few times since he's been back, and it's just been a quick in and out with no love involved. Even sex now seems almost too much trouble for him to bother with. I've asked him again to tell me what's wrong, and a couple of times got angry and told him to snap out of it, but he denies there is anything wrong, and says I am just imagining it. What do you think I should do next? — L.B., SA.

Your husband's biggest problem appears to be that he won't admit there is a problem, and it may be necessary for you to force him to look at himself more clearly. Whether or not your suspicions are correct about him having had an affair while interstate, his morose and thoughtless behavior now must inevitably place a great strain on your marriage, and you need to spell out to him that things cannot go on as they are indefinitely, that some time it is going to have to either improve or come to an end.

My husband is 45, and I'm worried that he might be turning into some kind of dirty old man.

In the past he's always been very fussy about his appearance, and fairly conventional in his moral standards. In some ways he was probably even a bit of a prude. We had a reasonable sex life, and he seemed happy enough. But lately something strange has been happening. He's let himself go, and become really scruffy, and I've found a couple of magazines of real hard core pornography in his room (we have separate bedrooms now). He stays out late at night, and will never tell me where he's been. When I ask him, he just says "around". Then recently, a friend of mine told me that she saw him in a park approaching some girls who couldn't have been more than 16. I'm too embarrassed to even ask him about it, and don't know what I could do anyway. What do you suggest? — L.V., Vic.

You should be careful not to jump to too many conclusions about your husband's behavior on the basis of very limited evidence. If you now have separate rooms, and very little sex life any more, it is not surprising that he should turn to hard core pornography as a means of stimulation. Many men do. And perhaps, after living a strict and conventional life for many years and finding it has got him nowhere, he has now begun to loosen up a bit. This may account for what you regard as his scruffy appearance. Your friend's allegation that she saw him approaching young girls in a park is potentially more serious, but you should not assume anything about him without knowing a great deal more. There could be a simple explanation for what was going on, or your friend may just have made a mistake. If your worst fears are correct, however, what he will need is help, rather than condemnation.

Something very strange happened to me at a party some weeks ago, and I'm still trying to understand it. I met up with this girl who I've seen quite often at my local pub. She was really drunk, and starting to rave, coming out with all sorts of weird things that made no sense at all. I usually make it a rule to avoid crazies, but by this time I'd had a few drinks myself, and I ended up giving her a lift back to her flat. It was three o'clock in the morning, but she put on some loud music and started dancing, though she kept falling over and crashing into the furniture. The neighbors started banging on the walls because of the noise, which didn't help matters. Then she said she wanted me to make love to her, and started peeling off her clothes. However when I moved close to her she started to get violent. She wasn't just pushing me away, she was punching me as hard as she could, and she's quite a big girl. I hit her back a couple of times and then she started throwing things. By the time I finally entered her she was shrieking with ecstasy, and I think I must have been shouting and roaring as well. It was the wildest sexual encounter I've ever had, as well as the most satisfying. Next morning I found myself covered with bruises and scratches. The strange thing is, I've seen her at the pub a few times since then and she acts as if she's never seen me before. She looks right through me, as if nothing ever happened between us. Do you think she is putting on an act, or could she really have forgotten such a wild night? — S.T., SA.

If she was as drunk as you say, either explanation is possible. It is not uncommon for people to perform bizarre acts while under the influence of large amounts of alcohol, but then to have no memory of what they have done the next day. On the other hand she may remember the evening very vividly, and now regrets that it ever happened. In that case, in pretending not to know you, she may be trying desperately to convince herself that nothing really happened, or that if it did she was too drunk to be held responsible for her actions.

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PLAYBOY INTERVIEW

ALLEN AYLETT

a candid conversation with the former north melbourne player who is now at the controls of australia's biggest football machine

The familiar white V cradling a rampant football is the only item to distinguish the reception area of VFL House from that of any other corporate office block. The logo of the Victorian Football League set against the blue-carpeted foyer symbolises the power base of the most influential organisation in Australian sport. Three floors above is the office of Dr Allen Aylett, the man who for the past five years has held down the VFL presidency during a period in which the league has achieved its highest ever public and commercial profile.

No other sport in Australia has the capacity to draw crowds, attract sponsorships and generate media coverage on a scale to match the VFL. By any yardstick, the flagship of the Australian football fleet is an awesome craft. During 1980 and 1981 the attendance records for the 12 Melbourne clubs were so impressive that the total figure of spectators to see a VFL match in one season surpassed the total population of the city of Melbourne. And that's more than three million. By way of comparison it would take every man, woman and child in the City of Greater London (population approximately 10 million) to attend at least one soccer match in a given season for the English Football League to match the VFL's proportionate crowd figures. And the London attendances fall well short of the ratio.

While nearly every professional football league in the world has recorded falling attendance figures and dwindling cash flows, the VFL flies in defiance of the trend.

The unlikely candidate at the hub of the VFL machine during this period of prosperity has been a former player who graduated from Melbourne University in 1957 with a doctorate in dentistry.

Dr Aylett's initial VFL association has been dwarfed by the shadow he throws from the presidential chair, but between 1952 and 1964 he made 225 appearances for the North Melbourne club. From the rover position he captained the club between 1961 and 1963, stitching together a hat-trick of best and fairest awards between 1958 and 1960. At the Australian interstate carnival of 1958 he collected the Tassie medal as the best player of the series and three years later was named in an all-Australian selection.

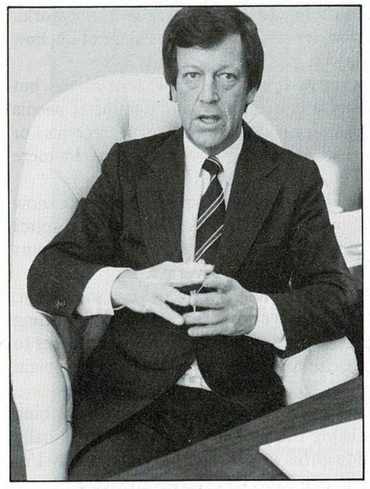
He found during his playing years that it was possible to withstand the pressures of competitive football while pursuing tertiary studies. When he graduated from university to the professional ranks he retained his player status, realising the enjoyment he extracted from football and dentistry offset the pressures of the other.

Some North Melbourne fans claim Aylett retired as a player before his time, but he had already determined to move into the administrative ranks. Just seven years later he was president of North Melbourne and less than six years after becoming the boss Kangaroo, he found himself filling the president's chair at VFL House.

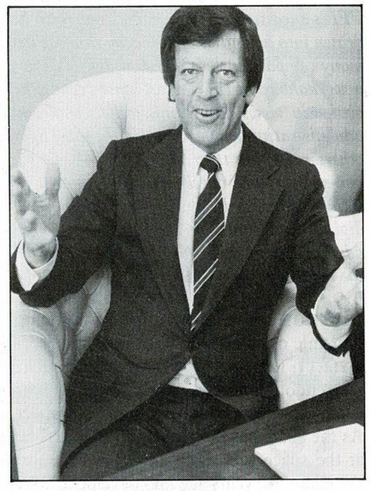
That sort of meteroic progression to the position vacated by Sir Maurice Nathan was fired by Aylett's dominion over a revolution in North Melbourne's fortunes. The Kangaroos had earned the poor-man's tag as The Shinboners and their lowly status among the VFL 12 was as much a part of football history as Collingwood's successes. The wheel turned during the Seventies as Aylett's committee induced Brian Dixon, later to become a Victorian Minister of Sport, to coach the club. However, the coaching coup of the decade occurred when North took advantage of a rule change (allowing staff to move after giving 10 years service to a club), by luring Ron Barassi into the Kangaroos' coaching fold. They ran last in 1972, sixth in 1973, were beaten grand finalists in 1974, won the premiership in 1975, and were second in 1976. In 1977, as Dr Aylett departed for VFL House, the Kangaroos again won the premiership.

North's prosperity proved of value to the entire league as Aylett's committee endorsed a policy of corporate welfare. When a sponsorship scheme packaged to benefit North

"When we can see the pleasure it provides for so many people it is hard to think about the negatives. For that reason you get wrapped up in the game. It's colorful, exciting, exhilarating, spectacular. . ."



"I've always believed that all sport is good, and if it so happens that Australian football becomes bigger than the rest, it won't be because we've gone out and canned other sports."



"We've got to ride with the bumps and learn as we go. If another football team starts in Adelaide, Brisbane or wherever, then we will watch closely and learn things from that exercise."

PHOTOS BY RENNIE ELLIS

Melbourne and three other successful clubs was proposed, North suggested any marketing initiatives should be tailored for the 12 clubs. From this attitude stemmed the VFL's marketing policy and the subsequent adoption of the VFL and club logos as marketing devices for numerous consumer goods.

Aylett's election to the presidency coincided with the appointment of Jack Hamilton as VFL general manager. The organisation adopted a more vigorous corporate stand, pioneering the appointment of corporate planners, marketing executives and media experts. Meanwhile, Aylett found time to develop a flourishing dental practice and fulfill his role as a husband and father of four.

The biggest challenge in his administrative career peaked last year when the VFL stood firm on its resolution that South Melbourne should play its 1982 premiership games from the home-base of the Sydney Cricket Ground and under the banner of the Sydney Swans. In the most heavily monitored controversy in Australian sport since World Series Cricket, Aylett's VFL board rode a sea of criticism, a revolution at South Melbourne and the final critical analysis of the NSW media to finally launch the Swans at the SCG. It was a monumental period in the history of the code and the first major rung on the VFL's plan to nationalise the sport.

While Melbourne football fever was starting the gradual climb towards that annual, spectacular climax known as the VFL Grand Final, PLAYBOY sent associate editor ***Neil Jameson*** *to interview the football supremo.*

Observes Jameson: "The man is essentially a fan but unlike the average supporter he has the academic discipline to distance himself from the game and his role. This obviously gives him a sense of proportion, an invaluable asset in the near fanatical atmosphere of VFL football.

"He has no need or desire to overstate the VFL's success, nor is he naive enough to be drawn into a conflict of ideals by running too many comparisons with other codes. He's not a workaholic in the normal sense because he obviously views part of his professional and administrative commitments in the same light others might see their leisure. At 48, he's a non-smoker and barely qualifies as a light social drinker. If vigor, enthusiasm and diplomacy count for anything in sports administration, he should still be ruling from the bridge for years to come."

PLAYBOY: Why is the VFL the most dynamic organisation in Australian sport?

AYLETT: The prime reason is that it's such a tremendous product. The game itself is an exciting, spectacular, body-contact sport. As the years have passed and we've arrived at the space age, those elements born into the game 130 years ago and developed since then have become what the public wants in this day and age. It's colorful, exciting, exhilarating, spectacular — just about every adjective people are looking for in their entertainment can be found in our game.

PLAYBOY: But surely the strength of the product is not the sole reason.

AYLETT: Having a good product makes the administration of the game so much easier. If there is a second reason why the VFL has been successful over the years, it's the competitiveness that has evolved amongst the 12 league clubs. It's intensely competitive, and people who can be classed as sound businessmen become different personalities when they get involved in the competitive atmosphere of league football.

PLAYBOY: Does that competitiveness complement the game's entertainment factor?

AYLETT: Yes. You couldn't have the intense competition alone making the game great. Nor the entertainment factor by itself. But together, the game and the intense competitiveness which has grown up since the VFL's formation in 1897, make it successful. The game has seen a lot of eras since the turn of the century — depression, wars, hard times and good, finally arriving at the current state of prosperity.

PLAYBOY: Has that been a tradition-building process?

It's my belief that the game is not only good in itself, it is good for the whole community. It's wholly Australian.

AYLETT: Definitely, and out of that tradition has developed the competitiveness.

PLAYBOY: By almost any criteria, the VFL is probably the most vigorously contested and followed football league in the world. With it being such a localised tradition, how do you gauge its popularity?

AYLETT: It's difficult to settle on a basis, but almost any aspect you nominate: media coverage, attendances, gate receipts or whatever, the VFL seems to generate more than everybody else.

There might be some cities I don't know about that attract crowds on a better proportional basis, or where the local sport receives a bigger coverage.

PLAYBOY: In spite of economic stagnation, and a world trend towards falling attendance in sport, the VFL continues to chart improving gates. How do you explain that?

AYLETT: The graph has kept climbing during the past five years. It's marginally down this year; when I say marginally I'm talking about .03 percent. By September it might be better. We're providing good television, and as far as entertainment is concerned, the VFL is providing exhilarating television. Over a period of 15 years we've concentrated on improving spectator facilities, and we're finally seeing the benefits.

PLAYBOY: You've mentioned the game's traditions, its innate entertainment qualities and the intense competitiveness. Yet it has been conceded by even the most dispassionate observer that the current regime is easily the most ambitious in memory.

AYLETT: If the people leading the organisation believe in the game, it is much easier to make the commitment. I'm a former player who played 250-odd games. The general manager is a former player, the secretary is a former player. In fact, all the executive staff have a vital interest in the game, in addition to their accepted administrative function.

PLAYBOY: So, basically, they are the most dedicated fans?

AYLETT: Yes. It's my belief that the game is not only good in itself, it is good for the whole community. It's wholly Australian, and in an era when it is hard to find something which is totally Australian, it is great to see our football doing well. Because of that it would be nice to see it established as our national code. When we can see the pleasure it provides for so many people it is hard to think about the negatives. For that reason you get wrapped up in the game.

PLAYBOY: With increasing competition for sponsorships and the spectator dollar, do you think 10 years from now we will witness the end of peaceful co-existence between the respective football codes?

AYLETT: I really haven't thought that through to a conclusion, but I'd imagine by then the codes would really have started to sort themselves out.

PLAYBOY: Will one code have emerged to dominate the market?

AYLETT: Put it this way — it will be a really professional market by then. Although there might be greater sponsorships and more people watching — particularly via television — the costs of operating a top professional league with the competitiveness that exists to make one code emerge on top, will mean super, super expenditure. So, I just cannot envisage a situation a decade from now where we'll have four codes running relatively equal.

PLAYBOY: Is the VFL best structured to win that battle?

AYLETT: We are very well set up administratively. We're not perfect by any means, but if it comes to taking another step to achieve our objectives, we are well qualified to make that move. As with any organisation or industry, growth and expansion tend to create not only more problems but larger ones.

PLAYBOY: While the VFL has continued to expand and take on many of the trappings of a large business structure, there have been those who have criticised the league for its ambitions. How do you cope with those influences?

AYLETT: Those people are just totally out of step with modern society. The truth is that whatever you do in life or business, if you don't seek to grow, improve or better yourself, then you are history. You might as well lay down and die.

PLAYBOY: The VFL has undertaken a more aggressive, businesslike stance under your leadership. How important to the league's development is its corporate drive?

AYLETT: Well, it would be a serious setback if that profile was ever eroded or disregarded.

PLAYBOY: It means that much to the league?

AYLETT: It is vitally important to so much of what we are trying to achieve.

PLAYBOY: That image has ballooned in the past five years. How do you plot the improved sponsorship interest plus the increasing personal interest by prominent members of the business community?

AYLETT: To understand that trend you must appreciate the game's tremendously high profile, particularly in Victoria. During the Seventies we noticed the first signs of this trend, where prominent business figures became personally involved at club level.

PLAYBOY: You are talking about people like Lindsay Fox, Bob Ansett and Ian Rice?

AYLETT: Yes, and there are others of similar status on the various club boards, offering their business expertise and support. The other thing which really changed the commercial direction of the game was sponsorship, and the concept to provide the benefits we now enjoy started in 1976 with the establishment of the VFL marketing division and the VFL logo.

When I was president of North Melbourne, we were approached to become involved in a sponsorship which took in three other large clubs. We looked at the proposal and thought the ideal situation would be for all clubs to benefit, so we said it should be done on a corporate basis for the entire good of the league. Up to that point there had been superficial discussions on tackling marketing and sponsorship along those lines, but nothing had been done. However, it was then put to the VFL board, and from there it became policy. The VFL logo was adopted, and this provided us with a tremendous merchandising item. The public's acceptance of the concept was immediate and it provided tremendous benefits for the clubs, not just in the cash created from the sale of merchandise sold under the VFL logo, but in all the spin-offs that a good marketing exercise will generate. It really helped promote the game.

PLAYBOY: That concept of the common good exercised by the VFL, stretches to the league's ground improvement plan, distribution of gate money plus the entire marketing program. Is that sort of central control unique?

AYLETT: I'm not aware of any sporting organisations who operate exactly in the same fashion. It has developed in recent times because we've got such a belief in the good the game can provide, especially what it does for the community and for kids. We just can't sit around and think the VFL is the only body playing football in Australia. Commonwealth Government figures show Australian football is the biggest participant code. That gives us a good feeling, but nobody else is going to promote the sport unless we do.

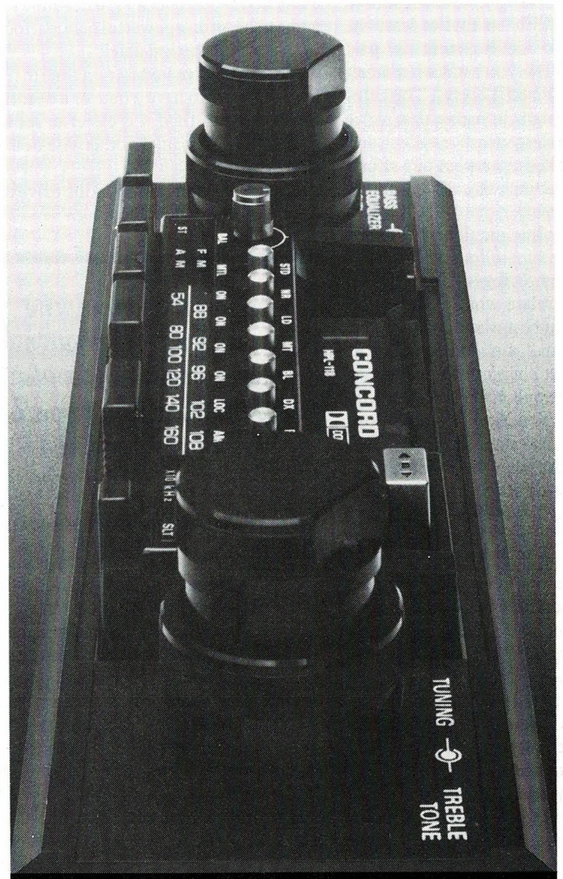
PLAYBOY: In other words, the direction must come from the top.

AYLETT: Yes.

PLAYBOY: That approach compares directly with NSW rugby league, where the control, financing and promotion is dictated largely by the power and fund-raising facilities of the licenced clubs. The result is some clubs are disproportionately powerful while others are withering on the vine. Has the VLF learned from that scenario?

AYLETT: I don't think the problem is exclusive to rugby league or licenced clubs. We're not without our problems of struggling clubs, and that will always be the case while free enterprise and personalities are involved. If you've got a strong-based team now, the chances are that in 10 years you'll be in a position of strength. If you've got a weak base now, chances are in 10 years you'll still be struggling.

We've taken the attitude that anything done to develop the game should be done in



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a corporate spirit. It's easier for us if that idea is centralised, rather than sorted out in 12 varying fashions by the clubs. The people out there are principally striving to win the premiership and keep financially viable. They're two big enough problems in themselves. The junior development is also a big challenge.

The VFL controls 36 full-time promotion assistants, that's three with each club. A lot of those people are players on a regular basis. They come in here to discuss problems, compare notes, and provide a controlled monitoring service. It is all paid for by our central funding, which is really the clubs' money anyway. They agree it is the best way of running it. It is subsidised from within the VFL so that at least the money for junior development is paid before the end of the year, and what is left over is then distributed 12 ways. The clubs have enough foresight to realise that we've more chance of getting results and eliminating mistakes if we pool our efforts rather than heading in 12 different directions.

PLAYBOY: What is the function of the three representatives?

AYLETT: When they got together to compare notes, one might relate what problems he was experiencing in Gippsland, and another might say he had a similar situation in Albury. From that they can formulate an overall strategy to apply to all areas.

PLAYBOY: The situation you've just described bears all the earmarks of a commercial enterprise with a central headquarters, branch offices, salesmen and even conferences. Is that a direct lift from recognised business practice?

AYLETT: We haven't had any consultants in to tell us what to do. It has just been an evolutionary process based on commonsense. Coincidentally, when we were involved with the success of the North Melbourne team, people from Melbourne University MBA graduates course asked us if we could speak as guest lecturers on the business principles used in the club revival. So, I went to the university and said: "Look, we didn't get any business consultants in, but I'll tell you what we've done in the five years and you can tell me if we were wrong or right." Anyway, the result was that four people asked if they could do their thesis on the business principles involved at North Melbourne Football Club, and the conclusion was that as far as the business academics were concerned our methods had been correct.

PLAYBOY: The Australian practice of recruiting players for administrative roles is often criticised by sports consultants on the basis that former players are unlikely to display the required objectivity. Yet the VFL has made a point of appointing former players to top jobs.

AYLETT: There are many qualified people around who happen to be former players. Not only do they have the ability to administer, they can also step back from it, see what is wrong or right, and then come back in. When I step back from my work I say: "If I was the new president coming in tomorrow, what would I do?" Also, I see having been a player and knowing what is involved at that level as a plus.

PLAYBOY: Have any other sports utilised VFL strategy?

AYLETT: I suppose you could say we started marketing our sport well before PBL got involved with cricket. The same applies with rugby league. The NSW Cricket Association organised for their team to come down and look at our organisation. There could be others, but I think it would be fair to say some of our ideas have been adopted elsewhere.

PLAYBOY: You've set a 1990 deadline for the game to be set on a powerful national footing. Is that a hypothetical date?

AYLETT: Yes. I've said it from time to time. I feel it's better to have a date or a deadline in mind, because then it is easier to see a real objective to what might otherwise be a basic plan or theory.

PLAYBOY: How important is the drive to put the game on a national footing?

As time went by the new South Melbourne administration could see more and more value in the opportunity to play in Sydney.

AYLETT: It has a high priority, but that doesn't mean we are going to rush out and try to make it happen next year. The emphasis must be on the planning and progression aspect, because we don't want it to fail. If we've got to slow down to make it happen, we will. At this stage we haven't got anything to tell us, on an annual basis, if establishing something like the Sydney Swans is the wrong or right approach for the next stage. We have to wait and watch week by week to observe how the exercise develops. Now, that same attitude will apply for whatever project we introduce next. The national project has a very high priority, but it will evolve under the thinking that we must be careful to avoid mistakes.

PLAYBOY: Will the history of the development dictate its progress?

AYLETT: Exactly. We've got to ride with the bumps and learn as we go. If another team starts in Adelaide, Brisbane or wherever, then we will watch closely and learn things from that exercise. We will have to keep an eye on the established clubs and see how they're coping with the new cost-incurring factors.

PLAYBOY: Won't sponsorship interest shown from prospective new areas offset any expense?

AYLETT: The whole exercise has to be looked at from all angles because it is so new and involved. People ask why we don't adopt the franchise systems that exist in the National Football League in America; but they are operating in a different market. They're talking about 28 teams for a market of 250 million. We have 12 teams in a market of only 15 million. So, you just can't compare the two.

PLAYBOY: Is there another area targeted as the one to follow Sydney Swans in the national exercise?

AYLETT: We've had very strong inquiries from Queensland, Adelaide, Western Australia, the ACT, and Tasmania. The only formal negotiations we've had at this stage have been with the South Australian League. But we've had informal talks with people from other areas.

PLAYBOY: It's early days with a season not yet completed, but what have you learned from South Melbourne's transition into the Sydney Swans?

AYLETT: It is probably too early to draw conclusions on which to base our next action.

PLAYBOY: Considering the amount of trauma and opposition to the South Melbourne move before the season kicked off, would the VFL wish to repeat the formula?

AYLETT: Well, let me recap the South Melbourne situation. More than 12 months ago, the South Melbourne board could see the writing on the wall which said they were going to be in serious financial trouble. They were one of the clubs with a weak financial base, so in July last year they made an application to play their home matches in 1982 in Sydney. Immediately, their members threw that administration out. The South board had envisaged that would happen, but before they were dismissed their application was approved by the VFL.

The VFL stuck by that decision, and as time went by the new South Melbourne administration could see more and more value in the opportunity to play in Sydney. As far as the club was concerned, they were also becoming more aware of the seriousness of the financial situation. It took a long time for them to realise it because the new board had virtually no administrative experience. They were dyed-in-the-wool supporters, and they began to realise the game they watched from the grandstand was a totally different one to the administrative job where they were looking at hundreds of thousands of dollars of deficits. When we got to December 23, it was a real crunch situation. I'm certain at that stage, although it was never put to the test, that the VFL would have elected to not have South Melbourne in the competition this year.

PLAYBOY: Was that mood obvious?

AYLETT: No, in fact nearly everybody was saying, "Who is the VFL to try to make South Melbourne move against its wishes?" So, the mood was anti VFL. At that stage the league had already passed a resolution that they would support South Melbourne to the tune of $400,000 if they would move to

Sydney. The clubs knew from all the research we'd done on the exercise that there was every chance of getting the money back if South Melbourne made the move. By the same token, the money was not on offer if South Melbourne were to stay in Melbourne, because there would have been very little chance of them redeeming the outlay. That money will eventually come back to our consolidated revenue pool. That's why I feel that unless South Melbourne went to Sydney the clubs would have voted to withdraw the $400,000. That would have left South in a virtual state of liquidation. That was a great concern to the VFL board because if a club gets itself in that state, it brings down the whole standing of the league.

PLAYBOY: Why was December 23 the crunch date?

AYLETT: On December 23 we put our assistant general manager in at South. He had just 94 days to make the whole thing go. It was an enormous task because the club was in disarray, completely split. Yet, Alan Schwab is a man of great ability, and he was able to turn the whole thing around with support from some fine people. As a result, the club was able to make the advances it really needed. That's where we are today, and that's what we've learned.

PLAYBOY: Did the VFL feel completely vindicated when, soon after it opened its Sydney campaign, South Melbourne signed a massive sponsorship deal?

AYLETT: Well, they attracted sponsorship three or four times higher than the next best. It was terrific. Almost unbelievable.

PLAYBOY: Passions had run very high during the "Keep South at South" campaign. Has the club's new-found prosperity dissolved all ill feelings?

AYLETT: No, not completely. Hopefully by September most will have disappeared. But I don't think it will totally disappear. There will always be those people who won't be able to see the light. One could spend hours and hours explaining the situation about costs and the club's future, but there will always be those who will not want to know. They could never concede that the club had no chance under the old situation.

PLAYBOY: You were a most prominent figure in almost every aspect of the debate. Was it the greatest challenge you've faced in your administrative career?

AYLETT: Yes. It was so important to take a strong, definite attitude at that time. It would have been so easy for us to say: "Sure, you can play here and keep running up more debts until the club finally goes under." But we couldn't let that happen. It took a strong stand to prevent that happening.

PLAYBOY: It would be hard to envisage a less powerful administrative regime seeing the exercise through to its satisfactory conclusion.

AYLETT: I'd agree with that.

PLAYBOY: How has the VFL budgeted for its national ambitions?

AYLETT: There was a budget for our role in the South Melbourne move, but because it was seen as a stage in itself the funding was confined to that exercise. We won't allocate any more until we decide what the next stage will be.

PLAYBOY: The experience of basketball and soccer, both sports with national leagues, is that the absence of localised derby games can seriously affect attendance figures. Does the VFL see that as a problem?

AYLETT: It is a concern to us. As I said earlier, we realise the basis of our success is the intense historical rivalries between the 12 districts represented in the competition. And we must never lose sight of that. While we all want to see national expansion take place, we must always ask ourselves just how much it is going to affect that base. Any expansion and prospect of increased revenue must be balanced against the risk of eroding that base.

PLAYBOY: Is there a real threat that the establishment of a national league based on Australia's major population zones would reduce the VFL competition to a "second fiddle" status?

The research we did during the three years we played the eight games in Sydney proved we didn't have to take spectators from other codes.

AYLETT: I'm certain that most of the clubs in a national league would be based in Melbourne. The game is so strong here that we would envisage most of the clubs in the Melbourne VFL competition would be in it. There is one at the moment that is not Melbourne based. There might be two or three more as the decade rolls on. Time will take care of all that. If, say, in the very distant future, there are only three Melbourne-based clubs, well that might be because the population distribution is such to warrant that situation. But looking at the period of the next 10 years, the competition will still involve most of the Melbourne clubs.

PLAYBOY: Statistics show that Sydney Swans' matches at the Sydney Cricket Ground have been patronised largely by people who have not been attending any other organised sport on a regular basis. Does the same ready-made market exist in south-eastern Queensland?

AYLETT: We've known all along that the ready-made markets existed because our surveys indicated just how many people who have either worked in or been born in States where Australian football is strong, have moved to Queensland or Sydney. The research we did during the three years we played the eight games in Sydney proved we didn't have to take spectators from other codes for our games to attract a crowd. We knew when the Swans moved to Sydney there would by many people who, as former southern State dwellers, would be willing to attend. We also knew there were many NSW people who were VFL supporters because of the TV coverage the game receives.

The figures bandied about during the decade before the Swans' move suggested there were 60,000 Victorians domiciled in Sydney. We knew that would form a reasonable base, but the most important aspect was the television sponsorship of matches played in Sydney.

PLAYBOY: Melbourne has a very powerful tradition for attracting Australia's largest crowds, whether it be a VFL grand final, a rock and roll concert or a demonstration. Do you feel that tradition will travel with the game's transition to other States?

AYLETT: It could. But the real factor we've got in our favor is color television. We believe it provides a terrific medium for our sport and a great educational basis for those who are new to the game.

PLAYBOY: With the demands of an expanded league placing greater demands on players' time and commitments, would you expect most players to be full-time professionals in the near future?

AYLETT: I hope not. I feel they're much better off being allowed to pursue a vocation or study in addition to football. Most of the guys will play in Melbourne, and they might travel outside Victoria only four times a year for games, so I don't think the demands on their time would be that much greater.

PLAYBOY: You're a former player who has developed a professional career in addition to the game, does it concern you that the intensity of full-time football would mean the breeding of unemployable former players as has happened in the US, Britain and Europe?

AYLETT: That's an obvious risk, and the main reason why I support the idea of players having careers. Those 10 years or so of what you might call a playing career are a very important period. What does a player do all day? He can't train eight hours a day, and at the most he might only play two games each week during the season. It can be a real problem if he doesn't have something worthwhile to keep him occupied.

PLAYBOY: It's traditional that the merits of the respective codes be compared, and both media and fans have made much of the rivalries. Have you encountered any outright antagonism from representatives of other football codes?

AYLETT: No, none whatsoever. I've always believed that all sport is good, and if it so happens that Australian football becomes bigger than the rest, it won't be because we've gone out and canned other sports. For instance, a lot of people are prepared to level criticism at soccer, but why shouldn't people play soccer if it's what they want to do? The same applies to all sport.

PLAYBOY: Have you encountered problems

(continued on page 146)

NIFTY

australia's most popular politician is a man of many faces

THE NSW Premier, Neville Wran, was putting on a brave front to journalists. His Government had just received a severe set-back in a by-election, with a swing against the Labor candidate of between 11 and 14 percent depending on whose figures you listened to in the clatter and clamor of the tally-room.

Journalists, a cynical lot always looking for blood, were grumbling among themselves that this was the first chink in the impenetrable political armor of Wran's most successful Government — a sign of crumbling of foundations from which no government could stage a long-term recovery.

The Bill Allen Affair was still in the headlines, giving the Government a shaking of its public credibility, which was to get worse as that sorry event trundled on out of the normal political control which Wran has exercised over the State Government since he came to power in May 1976.

The quite phenomenal flair which Wran has shown as a political leader was looking slightly tattered around the edges. Questions of his own future were put to him: did this most astute politician recognise the signs of a sinking ship? "When will you make a move to go to Canberra?" asked one journalist. Wran's answer, as always, was evasive. The journalist pressed the point: "But you would *like* to go to Canberra, wouldn't you?"

"Of course I'd like to go to Canberra. And I'd like to be Prime Minister. Yes, I'd like to be President. And I'd like to be Ruler of the World!" When the time is right, if ever it is, of course, he added, shifting his tongue out of his cheek a bit. Whether Wran will go to Canberra, and when, and whether he will one day become Ruler of the World, must remain a matter of speculation until he makes a decision.

Wran really hasn't made up his mind, according to one close associate. A shift to Canberra could be arranged easily enough: there are four or five safe Labor seats which could be arranged within half an hour, said the associate (who, like most other people who are prepared to speak frankly about Neville Wran, prefers to remain nameless).

Arranging a safe seat can be achieved by giving the present incumbent something to make it worth his or her while to leave Federal Parliament. Someone who has served long enough to leave Canberra with a Parliamentary pension, and might still be young enough to be given a sinecure somewhere within the State bureaucracy — or a lump sum of money — could easily be found.

But once there, there would be problems for a man who has been the big fish in a little pond: the Federal ALP Caucus could be expected to show some hostility to the idea of a newcomer going into a top job, and Wran's ego and ambition would not rest well for long in the very big pond of the Federal backbench.

His drive forward in politics also received a strong psychological setback with his throat problem — which I am assured was really a benign growth on the thyroid and most definitely *not* a slip of the scalpel at the

profile by tony reeves

hands of the operating doctor. The net result was that this barrister/politician had to re-learn to use his most valued asset: his voice. It made him think seriously about his life, and the hazards of overwork associated with top-line politics.

Nor would the unique Wran style travel well: in NSW he is backed by a formidable public image team which has successfully "snowed" the Sydney media since he first became party leader in 1974.

His well-oiled machine has ensured Wran has been identified only with good news, while other ministers have had to carry the can for the spots of bad news which visit all governments from time to time.

Just how Wran would perform without the machine to crank up his public image would be interesting to observe, for those who have had a chance to see the non-public Neville Wran can be excused for thinking there may be a touch of schizophrenia in his make-up.

What member of the public, for instance, would imagine that smooth-talking TV head capable of verbally lashing out at any member of the Parliamentary Labor Party who veers away from Wran's perception of political success? If the TV cameras could pry into the party room, a very different image of Wran would emerge. As former Whitlam speechwriter now working for Wran, Graham Freudenburg, once said: "Neville's the only man I know who can make the word 'fuck' sound truly obscene."

Many a minister or outspoken back-bencher has received lashings from the vicious edge of the Wran tongue as penalty for injecting their personal ideas on how the government should be run. It has been a successful tactic: the Cactus has only overturned Cabinet once since 1976 — and then only on a minor matter. To understand the vicious side of the Wran temperament one has to go back to his birthplace, the now trendy, gentrified Balmain, an inner Sydney suburb but at the time of Wran's birth, in the mid 1920s, a tough working-class area where everyone who lived in its village rubbed shoulders with the SP bookies and were on first-name terms with the tough young boys who were to become the "little Mr Bigs" of the Sydney criminal society. Wran was no exception, and when he cuts up vicious in Parliament against Opposition members or in the party room, it's known as "the Balmain coming out in him".

But Wran in government is the antithesis of the depression-year hoodlums which emerged from Balmain. He is good for Big Business — he calls it "The Big End of Town". And while his ministers and staff encourage contact between The Big End and the Government, many Labor observers and rank-and-file members see this as selling out the party's fundamentals. Wran will have none of this: it's a capitalist society, The Big End of Town is out there, and you can either encourage them to invest in this State by telling them straight what the ground rules are, or run the risk of losing their investment.

Certainly nobody in Parliament has ever suggested any impropriety about a Premier who is just as much at home at a boardroom lunch as he is having a beer with a bunch of workers in a corner pub. Indeed, the Liberals see Wran playing the game *their* way, only better.

Wran's appreciation of the Big End cuts deep with rank-and-file Labor supporters because it smacks of the flavor of previous NSW regimes. Former conservative Premier Sir Robert Askin, had a tremendous appreciation of the Big End game. Askin, who since departing the planet has been accused of heading up a shamefully corrupt period of NSW politics, knew the *real* clout rested not with the traditional scapegoats — the Abe Saffrons, Lennie McPhersons, George Freemans and their ilk. The strength is in the boardrooms of certain commercial and industrial powers, and Askin's understanding was such that these interests should, and would, be protected and nurtured regardless of political change. These guys had, and will always have, the most to gain by currying political favor, and Askin's political instinct told him that factor could be utilised. Both Labor idealists and detractors from the conservative ranks would agree the Askin attitude to favored consideration still pervades NSW politics. Liberal Opposition leader John Dowd is unlikely to disagree with the premise.

In NSW, Wran is backed by a formidable public image team which has successfully "snowed" the Sydney media since he first became party leader.

Dowd finds Wran "an unpleasant person to deal with, unlike other of my political opponents". Dowd, who comes from a very different political mould from Askin — one of the last of the tough old guard Liberals — has not made a great impression on NSW politics. He describes Wran's behavior in Parliament as "vindictive". Ho-hum. That old Labor war-horse, Rex Conner once described the NSW Parliament as "the hardest, most brutally personal Chamber anywhere in the Westminster system".

Dowd plays a low-key opponent, but says some very strong things: "Wran has no business expertise at all. A State Government is about running administration, and that Wran does badly. He puts his mates, political neuters, into key positions without any evidence that they can do the important job he's given them."

Dowd sees himself as an honest politician in a State which "has always been corrupt". Corruption, he points out, doesn't always come in the form of cash payments — it can occur by neglect or by ignoring.

It's all very well for Dowd to criticise: as Opposition Leader that's his job. But what if, in the improbable event that he defeated Wran and the ALP, he became the next Premier. Would *he* feel obliged to go to the former Premier and his arch opponent to find out about that Big End knowledge which seems so vital to the running of NSW? Is it possible for *anyone* of either political party to become the Premier and run the State without inheriting that knowledge? No, he says, he would never go to Wran. It is possible to get there (to the Premier's seat) "but the problems would be horrendous," he says grimly.

"The forces out there would work hard (to subvert you) and would probably get to you." He names two very prominent men he considers wield a remarkable amount of extra-parliamentary power. "They," he says, "are the real Mr Bigs of this State." Sadly, a lack of any real evidence prevents revealing their identity here.

As the brilliant lawyer mind of Neville Wran would say: "I'll get the bastards — *if* you can make it stand up in court." It sounds credible to an unsuspecting public, and despite the occasional outcry in Parliament about corruption, and the grumblings in journo's pubs about graft, no one has yet come up with the facts that would — as Wran would have it — stand up in a court of law.

And anyone who puts forward information that is less than hard legalistic evidence, becomes a victim of the old art of being discredited. The *only* test for allegations which will satisfy Wran is the test of a court. Anything less he dismisses as hearsay. He did this with the remarkable amount of information, evidence, and plain good logical figuring which my colleague, Barry Ward, and I presented to the Wran Government after three years of non-stop investigation into the murder in 1975 of Kings Cross newspaper publisher Juanita Nielsen. "It's all hearsay," said Wran. Many others who have made a genuine effort to present *some* useful information on crime and corruption to the Government have been similarly treated.

When journalist Bob Bottom got deeply into investigation of matters criminal, Wran pulled a political stunt by employing him — for a while — as the Government expert on organised crime.

In one incident, Bottom extracted a promise from Wran that if he (Bottom) produced a certain photograph, Wran would take action to dismiss a high-ranking public servant. Bottom produced the photo, and Wran did nothing.

So underneath the suave, populist public image of Wran, what is the real picture — the private Dorian Gray of the public Mr Nice Guy?

(continued on page 138)

"I've never enjoyed a cake and ice-cream party more. Could we have another scoop?"

ILLUSTRATION BY JOHN KURTZ

AT THE CONGLOMEROID COCKTAIL PARTY

she was 19, i was 93, and she ruled me. she made my hearts thunder

I AM CONTEMPORARY. I am conglomeroid. I am post-causal, contra-linear, pepto-modern. To be anything else is to be dead, nezpah? Is to be a fossil. A sense of infinite potential and a stance of infinite readiness: that's the right philosophy for our recombinant era. Alert to all possibilities, holding oneself always in an existentially pliant posture.

So when quasi-cousin Spinifex called and said, "Come to my foetus-party tonight," I accepted unhesitatingly. Spinifex lives in Wongamoola on the slopes of the Dandenongs, looking across into Melbourne. I happened to be in Gondar on my way to Lalibela when his call came. "Mortissa and I have a new embryo," said Spinifex. "We want everyone to help us engineer it. There'll be a contest for the best design. The whole crowd's coming, and some new people." *Some new people.* Could I resist? It's not such a big deal to go from Ethiopia to Australia for a foetus-party. Two hours, with transfers. I was on the pop-chute in half a flick. Pop to Addis, pop to Delhi, pop to Singapore, pop to Melbourne, pop pop pop pop and I was there. *Some new people.* Irresistible. That was the night I met Domitilla.

Spinifex and Mortissa live in a great golden egg on jewelled stilts, with oscillator windows and three captive rainbows moored overhead. In his current Shaping, Spinifex is aquatic, a big jolly blue dolphinoid with spangled red flukes, and spends most of his time in his moat. Mortissa's latest Shaping is more traditionally conglomeroid, no single identifiable style, a bit of tapir and a bit of giraffe and some very high-precision

fiction by robert silverberg

machine-tooled laminations, altogether elegant. I blew kisses to them both.

About 30 guests had already arrived. I knew most of them. There was Hapshash in his 10-year-old Shaping, the carpeted look, last word in splendor then. Negresca still in her tortoise-cum-chinchilla, and Holy Mary looking sublime in the gilded tubular body that becomes her so well. There is a tendency among the ultra-elite to keep the same Shaping longer and longer, with Hapshash the outstanding example of that. At first I thought it was a sign of the recent economic dreariness, but lately I was coming to understand it as a significant underground trend: out of fashion is height of fashion. That sort of thing requires one to stay really aware.

When Melanoleum came slithering up to me, she asked me at once how I liked her new Shaping. She looked exactly as she had the last time, a year ago at the big potlatch in Joburg — tendrils, iridescence, lateral oculars, high-spectrum pulse-nodes. For an instant I was baffled, and I came close to telling her I had already *seen* this Shaping, and then I caught on, comprehending that she had just had herself Shaped *exactly like her last Shaping,* which carried Hapshash's gambit to the next level of subtlety, and I hugged her with all my arms and said, "It's brilliant, love, it's devastating!"

"I knew you'd pick up," she said. "Have you seen the foetus?"

"I just got here."

"Up there. In the globe."

"Ah. Beautiful!"

They had rigged a crystalline sphere in a gravity-candle's beam, so that it hovered 20 feet above the cocktail altar, and in it the new foetus solemnly swam in a phosphorescent green fluid. It was, I suppose, 11 or 12 weeks old, a little alien-looking fish with a big furrowed forehead, altogether weird but completely normal, a standard human foetus with no genetic reprogramming at all. Pre-natal engineering is too terribly tacky for people like Mortissa and Spinifex, naturally. Let the standard folk do that, going to the cheapjack helixers to get their offsprings' club-feet and sloping chins and bandy legs cleaned up ahead of time, so that they can look just like everybody else when they come squirting out of the womb. That's not our way.

Melanoleum said, "The design contest starts in half an hour. Do you have a good one ready?"

"I expect to. What's the prize?"

"A month with anyone at the party," she said. "Do you know Domitilla?"

I had heard of her, naturally — last season's hot debutante, making the party circuit from San Francisco to the Seychelles. But I had been going the other way last season. Suddenly she was at my elbow, a dazzling child in a blaze of cold blue fire. It was her only garment, and under that chilly radiance I saw a slim furry form, five small breasts, sleek muscular thighs, vertebrae elongated to form the underpinning for a webbed sail down her back — an inspired conglomeroid of wolverine and dinosaur. My hearts thundered and my lymph congealed. She noted instantly the power she had over me and her fiery cloak flared to double volume, a dazzling nimbus that briefly enfolded me and dizzied me with the scent of ozone. She was no more than 19, and I was 93, existentially pliant, ready to be overwhelmed. I congratulated her on her ingenuity.

"My fifth Shaping," she said. "I'll be getting a new one soon, I think."

"Your *fifth?*" I considered Hapshash and Negresca and Holy Mary, trendily clinging to their old bodies. "So quickly? Don't. This one is extraordinary."

"I know," she said. "That's why it's time for a new one. Oh, look, the foetus is trying to get born!"

Indeed the little pseudo-fish that my quasi-cousins had conceived was making violent but futile efforts to escape its gleaming tank. We applauded. The servants took that as their signal to come among us with hors d'oeuvres: five standard humans, big and stupid and docile, bearing glittering food-fabrics on platinum trays. We did our dainty best; the trays were bare in no time and back came the standards with a second round, caviars of at least a dozen creatures and sweetmeats and tiny cocktail-globules to rub on our tongues and all the rest. And then Spinifex heaved himself out of the moat with a great jovial flapping of flippers that splashed everyone, and a bevelled screen descended and hovered in mid-air and it was time for the contest. Domitilla was still at my side.

Suddenly Domitilla was at my elbow, a dazzling child in a blaze of cold blue fire. It was her only garment.

"I've heard about you," she said in a voice like shaggy wine. "I thought I'd meet you at the moon-party. Why weren't you there?"

"I never go there," I said.

"Oh. Of course. Do you know who's going to win the contest?"

"Is it rigged?"

"Aren't they all?" she asked. "*I* know who." She laughed.

Mortissa was on the podium, under merciless spotlights that her new Shaping reflected flawlessly. She explained the contest. We were to draw lots and each in turn seize the control-stick and project on the screen our image of what the new child should look like. Judging would be automatic: the design that elicited the greatest amazement would win, and the winner was entitled to choose as companion for a month any of the rest of us. There were two provisos: Spinifex and Mortissa would not be bound to use the winning design if they deemed it life-threatening in any way, and none of the designs could be used by the contestants for future Shapings of their own. The lots were drawn and we took our turns: Hapshash, Melanoleum, Mandragora, Peachbloom, Hannibal. . .

The designs ranged from brilliant to merely clever. Hapshash proposed a sort of jewelled amoeba; Peachbloom conjured up a hybrid Spinifex-Mortissa, half-dolphin, half-machine; Melanoleum's concept was out of the Greek myths, Medusa hair and Poseidon tail; my one-time para-wife Nullamar invented a geometrical shape, rigid and complex, that gave us all headaches; and my own contribution, entirely improvised, involved two slender tapering shells that parted to reveal a delicate and sinuous being, virtually translucent. I was surprised at my own inspiration and felt instant regret for having thrown away something so beautiful that I might well have worn myself someday. It caused a stir and I suspected I would win, and I knew who I would choose as my prize. What, I wondered, did Domitilla have as her entry? I glanced toward her, and smiled, and she returned the smile with an airy rippling of her flaming cloak.

The contest went on and on. Hungering for victory, I grew tense, apprehensive, gloomy, despondent. Candelabra's design was spectacular, and Mingimang's was fascinatingly perplexing, and Vishnu's was awesomely cunning. Some, indeed, seemed almost beyond the capacity of contemporary genetic engineering to accomplish. I saw no hope of winning, and my month with Domitilla seemed in jeopardy. Her own turn came last. She took the podium, grasped the stick, closed the eyes, sent her thought-projection to the screen with an intensity of effort that turned her fiery mantle bright yellow and sent it arching out to expose her blue-black furry nakedness.

On the screen a standard human form appeared.

Not quite standard, for it was hermaphrodite, round rosy-nippled breasts above and male genitals below. Yet it was the old basic body other than that, the traditional pre-Shaping shape, used now only by the unfortunate billions of the serving classes. I gasped, and I was not alone. It's no easy thing to amaze a group so worldly as we, but we were transfixed with amazement, dumbstruck by Domitilla's bizarre notion. Was she mocking us? Was she merely naive? Or was she so far beyond our level of sophistication that we couldn't comprehend her motives?

Trays clattered to the ground, drinks were spilled, we coughed and wheezed and muttered. The meters that were judging the contest whirled and flashed. No doubt of the winner: Domitilla had plainly provoked the most intense surprise, and that was the criterion. The party was at the edge of scandal. But Mortissa was equal to the moment.

"The winner, of course, is Domitilla," she said calmly. "We salute her for the audacity of her design. But my husband and I regard it as hazardous to the life of our child to give it the standard form for its first Shaping, because of the possibility of misunderstanding by its playmates, and so we invoke our right to choose another entry, and we select that of our quasi-cousin Sandalphon, so remarkable for its combination of subtlety and strength."

"Well done!" Melanoleum called, and I did not know whether she was cheering Mortissa for her astuteness or Domitilla for her boldness or me for the beauty of my design. "Well done!" cried Vishnu, and Candelabra and Hannibal took it up, and the tensions of the party dissolved into a kind of forced jubilation that swiftly became the real thing.

"The prize!" someone shouted. "Who's the prize?"

Spinifex thumped his huge fins. "The prize! The prize!"

Mortissa beckoned to Domitilla. She stepped forward, small and fragile-looking but not in the least vulnerable, and said in a clear, cool voice, "I choose Sandalphon."

We left the party within the hour and popped to San Francisco, where Domitilla lived alone in a spherical pod of a house suspended by spider-cables a mile above the Bay.

I had my wish. And yet she frightened me, and I don't frighten easily.

Her fiery mantle engulfed me. She was 19, I was 93, and she ruled me. In that frosty blue radiance I was helpless. Five Shapings, and only 19! Her eyes were narrow and cat-yellow, and there were worlds of strangeness in them that made me feel like a mud-flecked peasant.

"The famous Sandalphon," she whispered. "Would you have picked me, if you had won? Yes, I know you would. It was all over your face. How long have you had this Shaping?"

"Four years."

"Time for a new one."

I started to say that Hapshash and the other leaders of our set were travelling in the other direction, that the fashionable thing was to keep one's old Shaping; but that seemed idiocy to me now, as I lay in her arms with her dense harsh fur rubbing my scales. She was the new thing, the terrifying inexorable voice of the dawning day, and what did our modes matter to her?

We made love, my worlds of experience against her tigerish youthful vitality, and there, at least, I think I matched her stroke for stroke. Afterwards she showed me holograms of her first four Shapings. One by one her earlier selves stepped from the projector and pirouetted before me: the form her parents had given her, that she had kept for nine years, and then the second Shaping, that one always tends to cling to through puberty, and the two of her adolescence. They were true conglomeroid Shapes, a blending of images out of all the biological spectrum, a bit of butterfly and a bit of squid, a tinge of reptile and a hint of insect, the usual genetic fantasia that our kind adores, but a common thread bound them all, and her current Shape as well. That was the compactness of her body, the taut narrowness of her slender frame, powerful but minimal, like some agile little carnivore, mink or mongoose or marten.

When we redesign ourselves, we can be any size we like, whale-mighty or cat-small, within certain basic limitations imposed by the need to house a human-sized brain in the frame that the gene-splicers build for us. But Domitilla had opted always to construct her fantasies on the splendid little armature with which she had come into the world. That too was ominous. It spoke of a persistence, a self-sufficiency that is not common.

"Which of them do you like best?" she asked, when I had seen them all.

I stroked her strong, smooth thighs. "This one. How tight your fur lies against your skin! How beautiful the sail is on your back! You've brought out your deepest self."

"How would you know my deepest self after two hours?"

"Don't underestimate me." I touched my lips to hers. "Part hunting-cat, part dinosaur — the metaphor's perfect."

"Let's make love again. Then we'll pop to Jerusalem."

"All right."

"And then Tibet."

"Certainly."

"And Baltimore."

"Baltimore?"

"Why not?" she said. "Hold me tighter. Yes. Yes."

"Do I get only a month with you?"

"Thirty days. Those were the terms of the contest."

"Do you always abide by terms?"

"Always," she said.

We popped to Jerusalem at dawn, and then to Tibet, and then, yes, to Baltimore. And many more places in the 30 days. She was trying to exhaust me, thinking that 19 has some superiority over 93, but there, at least, she had misjudged things; at each Shaping we are renewed, you know. I loved

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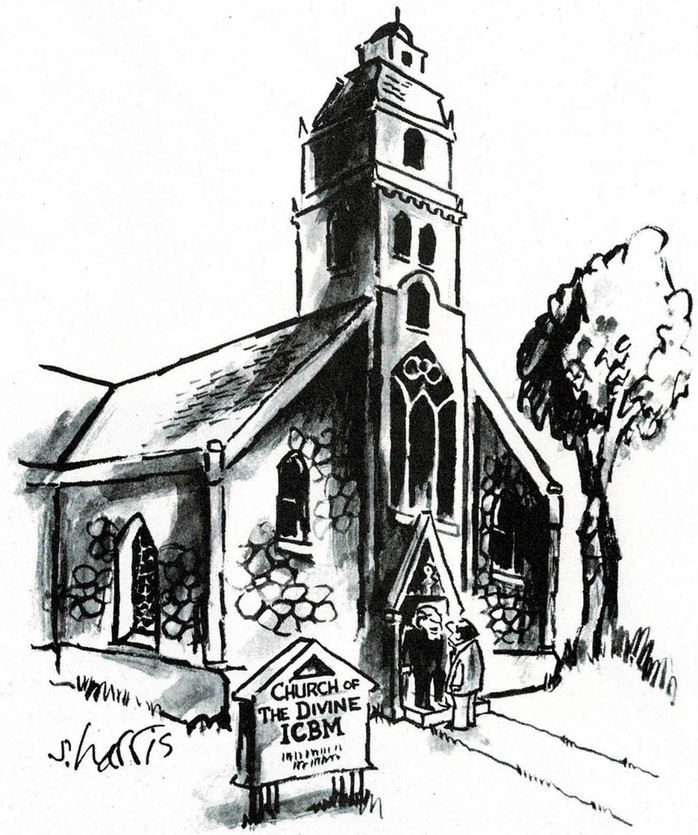


"Actually, we're part of the military-industrial-theological complex."

ILLUSTRATION BY DAVIS/FARRELL

HOW I GAVE UP DOPE

a stoned saga of meaningful silences, masochism and fail-safe provisos

IN AMSTERDAM seven years ago I bought a lump of hashish the size and shape of Jimmy Durante's nose for twenty dollars. It seemed a rare bargain, even in Amsterdam, until I smoked some. My skin turned grey and clammy and I was seized by ghastly burning thirst. Then it seemed that a giant anaconda was exploring my main bowel. I felt hot and dizzy, then cold and dazed. Could this actually be Jimmy Durante's nose? Some bargain, I remember gasping to my wife, Jimmy Durante's stinking great bogie warehouse for twenty bucks! She barely had time to ignore me (my wife has no interest in drugs, or drug-related deaths) when it all came right. No more anaconda, no thirst: just me in a tent on an airbed smiling out across the country side like that pubescent idiot on the cover of Mad. *For 15 minutes I stayed mildly stoned, then it wore off completely.*

article by frank dunbar

So there were five minutes of appalling thirst, five minutes of snake-in-the-bowel, several minutes of simulated malaria and a quarter of an hour of intoxification.

Despite the dubious appeal of this, I couldn't afford another attempt at scoring from uniformly treacherous Americans who sat around on the city's canal bridges. And who could be sure what poison they would peddle next? I concealed the filthy Durante brew in the crotch of my underpants and as we toured Europe it had ample opportunity to prove itself.

But never did.

That dope made me feverish in Frankfurt and caused sweaty squeamishness from Paris to Madrid. I wrestled the anaconda manfully all the way up the French Riviera and developed near-terminal dysentery in Nice.

At 31 I now realise that most of my memories of Europe are connected with bad hash. As we wound down through the mountains toward Marseille, Grand Tour nearly over, I recall saying how good I felt.

"Last joint worn off?" guessed my wife. Yep. Like the man pulverising his own skull with a hammer, it felt nice to quit.

A few weeks ago when I decided to stop smoking dope (except on rare and special occasions), that Amsterdam hashish came to mind as a convincing argument that marijuana *is* addictive. The stuff is so addictive, psychologically, that it makes those who know it is addictive pretend it isn't.

In certain personalities (alas, like mine) regular dope smoking produces a dependence which is effectively an addiction: why else would anyone endure dehydration, malaria and anacondas for five months in return for a few hours of mildly altered consciousness?

By inserting the clause "except on rare and special occasions", I plan to avoid having to admit failure.

I feel slightly comforted by an impression that giving up dope seems to be an epidemic right now. Numerous smokers around my age are swearing off the stuff, but why?

Health awareness has increased but that's just part of it. Mostly, I believe, these startling sacrifices are integral to the morality of the premature mid-life crisis.

My own crisis (which may continue for some years) was precipitated by watching an ageing and well-known spokesman for the Australian Marijuana Party talking about dope on television. Defensively, of course . . . with his blitzed pupils struggling to focus and his smile almost apologetic.

There is a man, I thought, who has lost his edge. He will never have a mid-life crisis because he doesn't need or deserve one. The good ship cannabis will float him through life. As a veteran smoker he may never again reach the peaks — but dope will help him dodge the low points. Smiling, at peace, comfortably numb, he'll ride familiar bliss to the end of the line.

This will involve between three and six joints a day, something that social dabblers of dope don't seem to appreciate. Unlike habitual smokers, dabblers often scoff at the idea of cannabis being addictive. They rarely keep a stash at home, or if they do, it's brought out twice a year (on rare and special occasions, no less). Scarcely believable to habitual users, the social smoker will often "forget" about having stuff and find a bag of prime Queensland heads two years later under the carpet.

As with booze, this can be a stage en route to habitual use, when vacuuming the carpet to gather enough spillings for a joint is more characteristic.

I began smoking dope 10 years ago and since then, according to my mini-calculator, I have spent roughly $14,000 on the hobby.

Enough to buy a farm on which to grow a $1 million dope crop.

Enough to engage a top QC to fight the growing rap.

Enough to give you a mid-life crisis.

On the plus side, I have met some very engaging bronchial sufferers, laughed enough to develop the jaw muscles of an alligator and seen some of the world's most obscure late-night movies. I have worked for a Strange and Dangerous newspaper and survived as a regular of the Falcon Hotel with the infamous Big Rude Boys of Victoria.

I began smoking dope 10 years ago and since then, according to my mini-calculator, I have spent roughly $14,000 on the hobby.

There's much more, and don't think you can stop me elaborating. I must tell all . . . without dope, these memories (and alcohol and cigarettes) are all I have. Getting it all out will be therapeutic and then, when it's over, I never want to see any of you pathetic, weak-willed, irresponsible little mummy's boys again.

Except on rare and special occasions.

●

A decade ago I lived in a coastal town on the east of New Zealand's North Island. There were crowds of Australian surfers loafing about the place, lots of girls. The surfers used to stay in bed until 3pm every day and then get up to shoplift dinner before the stores closed.

I was a cadet reporter for the local daily: an earnest reliable young man in love with someone far away. Just as well — it saved me having to compete with the surfers for local girls, who seemed cruelly indifferent to earnest reliable young me.

Except for one.

The sexiest and most dangerous-looking girl worked in a bakery with her appallingly ugly parents and six Pomeranians. The way she smiled and moved around made me prickly.

So I borrowed a friend's tiny motorbike and asked her to come away for the weekend. We pipped 30km up the coast and checked into a motel . . . where, despite the flawlessness of my plan so far, an evil portent filled our double suite.

This was a restless girl. She sighed and fidgeted, paced and brooded. Her large dark eyes seemed full of secrets, also dark.

Basically she just wanted to look out the window.

And she did, even during sex.

Catching her attention, I made a speech: "I don't understand you. Why bother with this weekend if it's such a drag?"

"Because you're so straight," she said. "What do you think those deadshit surfies do in bed all day? They do drugs, man, all kinds. Drugs are screwing my head, especially smack . . ." She turned from the window (at last!) and shoved out a spotty arm.

"What you think these are? Mosquito bites?"

Imagine, John Boy Walton waking in the middle of a Grateful Dead concert. Smack! Dirty needles! Junkies in the bakery! The revelation put me in mild shock. Then my pride prissily rebelled: how dare she take advantage of my purity! I began thinking of ways to get rid of her.

Which proved unnecessary. She got rid of me. Next weekend at the pub she introduced me to one of the surfie crowd, a cute blonde from Sydney who worked at a local record shop and stole latest releases for all her friends.

"I hear you're super-straight," she said, eyeing my Clark Kent sports jacket. "But you must smoke dope, right?"

"Oh sure," I lied. "But not enough to get hooked on the stuff." The record lady gave me an odd smile (How could she know I *would* get hooked?) and produced a teensie joint. There must have been eight practically identical surfers at our table. They all stuck the little joint into their facial hair and sucked.

Me too.

Soon everyone was snickering like crazy at their own jokes. I clearly remember thinking: the salt water has eaten away their brains. Personally, I felt nothing.

But when I got home I discovered that the blonde had dropped another joint in the pocket of my awful coat. I went down to the surf beach, sat on a dune and smoked it with two giant sucks.

And a full moon popped from behind the clouds and lit up the sea. For half an hour I thought it was the sun.

●

In the early Seventies, the major dope newspaper in Australia was not *Nation Review* or any of its underground imitators.

(continued on page 124)

Tetcha first came to our notice when she was an entrant in the Miss Philippines contest, and since then she has gained fame, partly because of the uproar these pictures caused in her homeland.

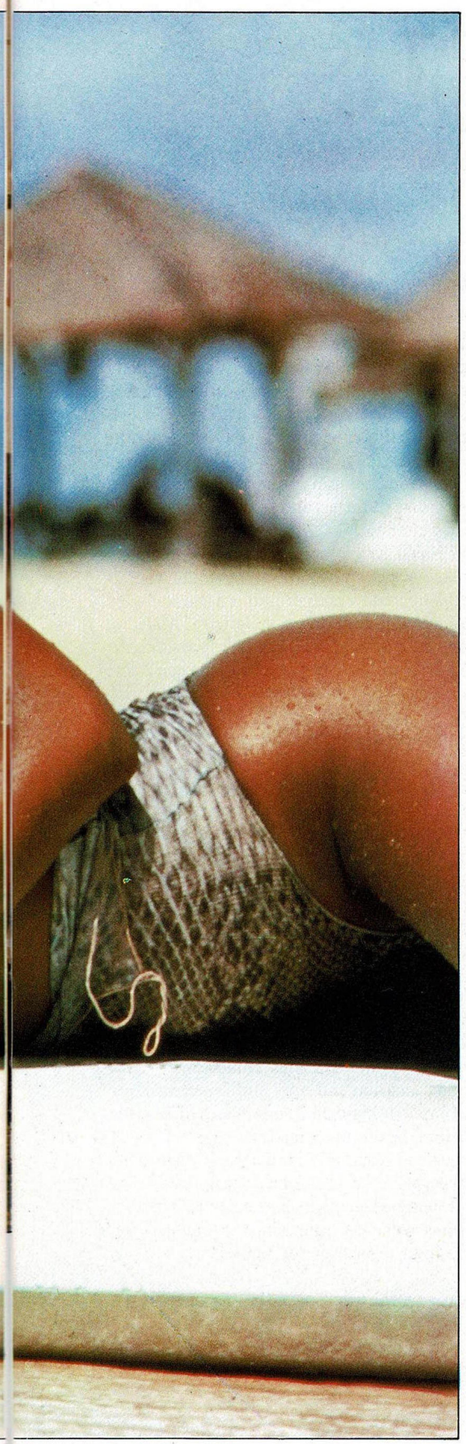
TETCHA

PHOTOGRAPHY BY HERBERT HESSELMANN

Having to handle criticism from the local press has not fazed Tetcha, who says she is proud of her pictorial. "It was a fascinating experience," she says, "and I wouldn't hesitate to do it again."

Even though she's now found fame, Tetcha once believed that the academic life was what she wanted. She was studying architecture and planning a career in that field when the bright lights lured her away.

At only 20 years of age, Tetcha still has a lot of living to do before she settles down. "When the time comes, I'll be happy to be a wife and mother," she says, "because I'm really a homebody."



CAPTAIN PUGNACIOUS

sydney football's greatest battler spits out the mouthguard

BACK IN autumn, on a sparkling Sunday, Tommy Raudonikis took a rare afternoon off from football and boxing. While his Newtown 1981 Grand Final outfit was being humbled by rugby league easybeats Canberra Raiders, Tommy was fishing the Hawkesbury River with his family. Perhaps it was his kids' obvious happiness at having their dad all to themselves, or the realisation he was truly relaxing for the first time in years that brought him to the decision: 1981 would be the last playing season for Tom Raudonikis. The greatest non-quitter of them all had decided to quit.

In a gambling town like Sydney where bookmakers are high priests of hope, and placing a bet is as ritualistic as a prayer offering, the money says Tommy will be there when 1983 pre-season training opens the sweat pores. After all, it's not the first time Tom Raudonikis had vowed to quit; and a decade-and-a-half of being the Captain Pugnacious of football's most destructive league had shown his greatest asset, and flaw, is not knowing *how* to stop.

On February 27, (so early in the season many players were still a weekend or two from full match fitness), Raudonikis smashed Ernie Garland's jaw in a reserve grade match between Newtown and Eastern Suburbs. Tommy claimed there was no intent and if the judiciary suspended him, he would retire. They did; he didn't. Instead, as he stalked from the hearing in a rage of disillusionment, Raudonikis was breathing defiance.

"There is no way I'll be quitting rugby league," he vowed. "I'll keep battling on."

He might be the meanest man in rugby league but Raudonikis could point to his record: "I've never been sent from the field during a club match."

It didn't wash with the judiciary boys — they gave him a 12-week holiday. Now, this was no journey-man footballer they were putting out. This was Tommy Raudonikis, Newtown club captain, former Australian halfback and the man who has worn the national jersey more times than any other player except for Keith Holman — and he is only two matches short of that record. Raudonikis, the former Rothmans Medal winner and a man who had been made a life member of Western Suburbs during a glorious playing career with that club, is a Sydney institution. Since Arthur Beetson's retirement to a Queensland pub, Raudonikis had become *the* personality, *the* man of Sydney rugby league. And 12 weeks in the wilderness was a hard lump to swallow. Expensive too; he'd lose about $4000 in match payments and bonuses.

Like Barassi, Ian Chappell and Alan Moffat, Raudonikis is one of those guys who makes things buzz whether he's on or off the field. There was no way they could make Tommy disappear for 12 weeks. It meant exit rugby league half, enter professional boxing promoter.

Raudonikis' association with boxing started last year when he fought old mate and halfback adversary, Greg Oliphant, in a benefit bout. Oliphant is a former pro fighter but Raudonikis' whirlwind attack stopped him in the second with a cut head. Jeff Malcolm, the Australian welter-weight champion appeared on the same program but was KO'd by his opponent and immediately announced his retirement. Malcolm was still in his mid-twenties but his career had been hampered by poor promotion and unhappy management. Months after the exhibition affair, Malcolm reconsidered and approached Raudonikis with a proposal for the rugby league player to take over as the boxer's manager. The fighter chose a perfect moment because it was Tommy's birthday and he was pissed.

"What are you talking about?" said Raudonikis. "I can't even manage myself."

But he agreed, and by the New Year, Malcolm was back near his best and angling to reclaim the title he had relinquished to Peter Berrigan. Under Tommy's weight, the January 26 title fight generated heavy media interest and the press had a field day when firm favorite Malcolm copped what appeared to be the raw end of a poor judging decision.

"It was such a crook decision," said Raudonikis, "that some guys who'd backed Berrigan refused to collect. They thought it was a stew."

Controversy dogs Tommy Raudonikis like a stray pup and it was hard on his heels when he applied to hire the Sydney Opera House for a fight promotion he billed as World War Three. The tag was prophetic because the disqualification of Alex Temelkov in one of the features sparked a ring invasion and brawling demonstration. Fans who had backed Temelkov claimed Raudonikis had held the bets on the fight, and before the promoter made it home that night, he had received eight death threats. Raudonikis could have done without the adverse publicity but he philosophically noted that the fans were talking about boxing again. More particularly, they were talking about Raudonikis and his number one charge, Jeff Malcolm. Tommy has a high regard for the fighter.

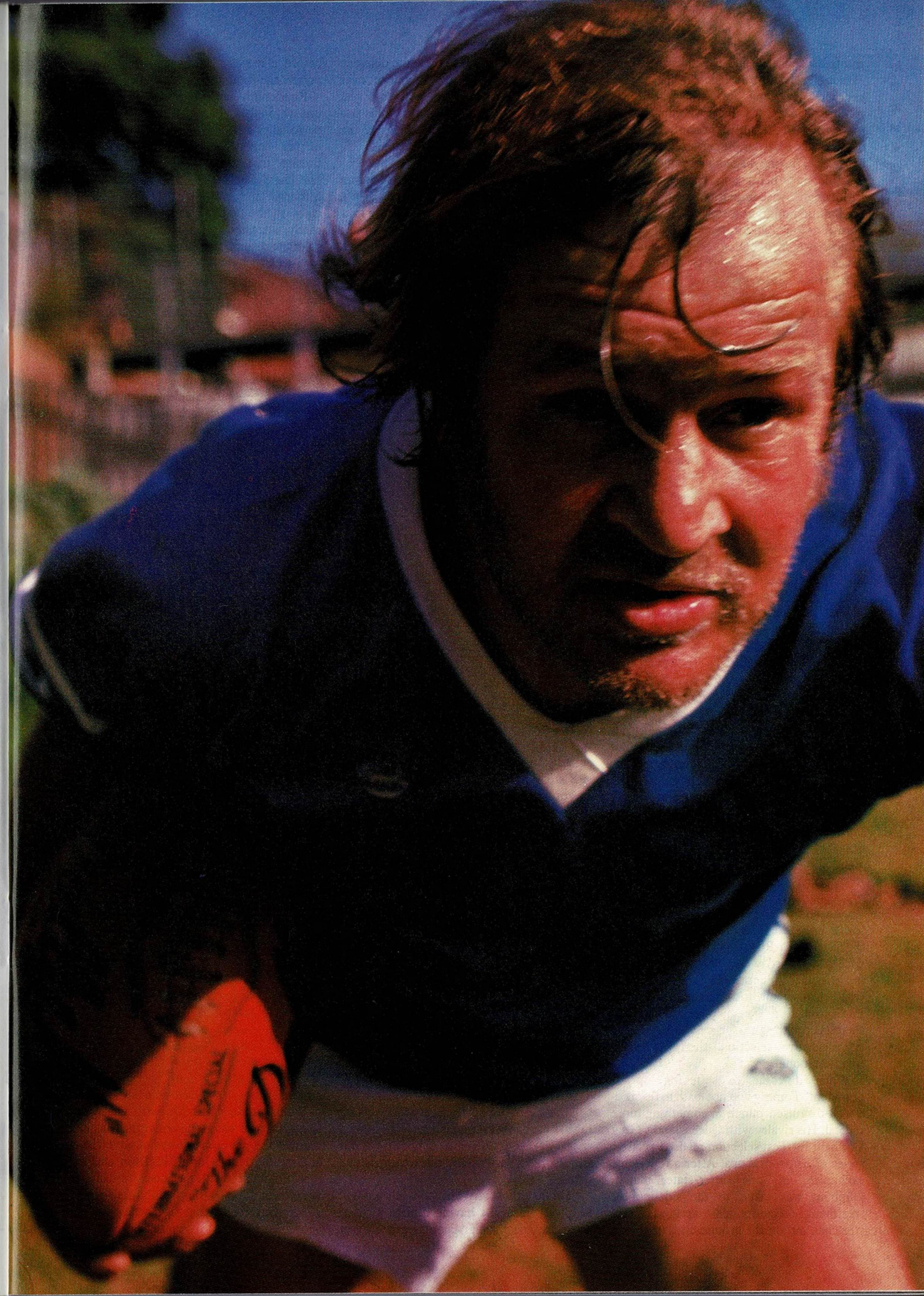
How high?

"I think he could win a world title," says the manager.

●

Ironically, Tommy Raudonikis looks more like the classic pug than any fighter should. A long, white scar runs a ragged parallel to

article by neil jameson



PHOTOGRAPHY BY PETER CRAWFORD

an oft-broken nose and if you capture him without his dentures (the originals were knocked out long ago) the profile is complete. At 5'6", he is compact and powerful with the bullish neck of a boxer. If he looks like a battler, he certainly admits to being one, having waged a struggle against the tide since being born the son of poor Lithuanian-Swiss migrants. His family left the Bathurst migrant camp where Tom was born for Cowra and a deprived but happy adolescence in a house near the Lachlan River.

A Huck Finn existence? No, that's romanticising it a bit too much, says Tom. He had a wild pig for a pet and his knowledge of the breed came in handy years later when, on a representative tour of Queensland, he and Terry Randell caught a scrub piglet and let it go in the bar where the boys were drinking.

That sort of practical joking, combined with the demon drink and his natural aggression, landed Raudonikis in more than his share of fights during his air force stint as an air frame technician.

At 18, he found himself in Sydney's Western Suburbs reserve grade after being plucked from the near obscurity of Wagga Magpies.

"We got flogged 35-5 in my first reserve match, and I said to myself, what am I doing here?" he recalls.

Noel Kelly, a near-legendary battler toughened by years campaigning for club and country, took the young recruit aside and told him he had the ability to make first grade and to stay there for a long time.

"What's more, you'll eventually end up with a face like mine," added Kelly, a man of that footballing-warrior breed so proud of battle scars. Kelly wasn't wrong. That same season, an Eastern Suburbs player smashed Raudonikis' cheekbone; but hurting Raudonikis was akin to baiting a bull. Within two seasons, he held the title of the most aggressive halfback in Sydney and any opponent who stood in the way of Raudonikis and a representative jersey was in for a hard time. The halfback slot is the greatest one-on-one situation in rugby league, and flair and inventiveness are seen as the twin tools to separate the best from the rest. Tom Raudonikis had neither, so with sheer hard work, determination and his mastery of controlled aggression, he would hound and intimidate an opponent into submission. One by one he eliminated them through the process of Sydney representative selection, then State and finally national.

When it came to softening up an opponent, Tommy was not loath to resort to a well-disguised punch or something more radical. His rivalry with Queensland's Greg Oliphant for Test selection realised a classic series of confrontations. After a few fierce exchanges in one inter-state match, Oliphant was taken to the sideline for treatment. Raudonikis spotted him stretched out on the ground and, unable to resist the temptation, raced over to deliver a few swift kicks and tip the ice bucket over his opponent. Queenslanders have a real love-hate relationship with Raudonikis and whenever he travels north he plays it to the hilt by wearing "I hate Queensland" T-shirts.

His rivalry with Oliphant settled into a deep respect and finally a firm friendship. The pair regularly roomed together on tour and the association produced its lighter moments. Tommy's wife, Trish, gave birth to their third child during 1978 when her husband was in England on a Kangaroo tour.

The tourists celebrated that night, but long after the others drifted off to bed and the bar closed, Oliphant and Raudonikis placed a table and two chairs in the lift and stocked it with cans. They spent all night going up and down, inviting any guests to join them. At seven in the morning, a team selector summoned the lift to discover two very drunk Australian halfbacks. By that stage the lift was choked with empty cans and Oliphant had become entangled in a roll of toilet paper. The team management wasn't exactly impressed at having the squad's only two halves out of commission.

Raudonikis has always hooked his star to unfashionable causes and pitted his personality against traditional power bases.

Raudonikis' obsession with dominating the opposing half produced the only two dismissals in his career. Neither time disadvantaged his side because he managed to take an opposing player with him. During the first few minutes of a 1977 World Cup match against England, Raudonikis got over-zealous in his treatment of Roger Millward, the most elusive player in the English side. Raudonikis got his marching orders but Millward followed after he retaliated. The following year in a match against an English side, Raudonikis realised a hamstring injury would soon have him off the field. As a scrum was being set, he threw the ball straight at the opposing half who retaliated, and the two players were dismissed. Raudonikis was going anyway, but he'd made up his mind to take someone with him.

That desire to beat them by whatever means runs throughout the Raudonikis character. He makes no apologies for it but admits it is part of his ultra-competitive nature.

"I'd do almost anything to win a game," he says. "If I was having dinner with an opposing coach or a star player the night before a match, I'd figure out a way to poison the food and make them crook."

Raudonikis has always hooked his star to unfashionable causes and pitted his personality against traditional power bases in his empathy for the battler spirit. Boxing, that much-maligned of sports, is his latest cause. First it was Western Suburbs and now it's Newtown. Both clubs fit the battler classification. They've rarely attracted glamor players to their colors and their support is drawn from the lower end of the socio-economic scale of Sydney's older urban sprawl. Once, when local loyalty meant you played with the club nearest home, Newtown and Western Suburbs were powerful outfits. Long-range talent scouting, and the fat cheque-books flashed by such glamor clubs as seaside giants Manly-Warringah and Eastern Suburbs, drew the shades on those days. Just four years ago, when astute scouting and building by coach Roy Masters had stitched together a Wests side of championship potential, Manly flashed the magic register and a third of the Magpies' star side found itself wearing the maroon and white of Manly.

The silvertail-battler syndrome is close to the core of some of sport's hot rivalries, and it's the crucial element in every Manly-West showdown.

Out West they drive second-hand Kingswoods, live in fibro houses and under the thumb of the mighty HP. They're the sort of battlers Tommy Raudonikis can identify with and he has played his balls off for them. When Wests met Manly at the Magpies' Lidcombe Oval, the class cry from the fans was "fibro, fibro" in defiance of the easier lifestyle enjoyed by the Northern Beaches supporters. One match Raudonikis will never forget is his 200th for Wests. They smacked Manly's arse in a runaway win and tough-as-teak Tom shed a few tears of pride and pure emotion at full-time.

For the average player, the class difference was little more than a handy psyching device to boil the anger to that prescribed level when adrenalin and aggression run under their own steam. But it was something more for Raudonikis. The man harbors an intense dislike of sham, privilege and pretension.

The class elitism the Eastern Suburbanites exercised over the Western, working-class belt antagonised Tommy's fighting instincts.

"You know when you're in the Eastern Suburbs," he confides, "the joggers are wearing sunglasses and most of them couldn't run out of sight on a dark night."

When Tommy had run with the Wests flag as far as it was going under the Masters' regime, the persuasive ways of advertising and media trump John Singleton and the lure of another battler's cause drew him to Newtown. Under Singleton's cash drive, Newtown were putting together a powerful

(continued on page 140)

"You've come back! I always knew you would, someday."

PHOTOGRAPHY BY TANDY ROWLEY

SLOW BURN

finding "the man" in the middle east can be a hazardous assignment

THE FAT KID swung out of the side street, a taxi swerved, a bus ignored everything, and a Peugeot ploughed into the back of a donkey-drawn wagon; a ton of watermelons rolled down the corniche. "We are really quite good drivers. See, nobody killed," said my guest, as the donkey got to its feet, the wizened old Arab driver rewound the scarf round his head, and the fat kid circled lazily back — again inviting disaster — to see what was going on. The waiter came from behind the ivory lace screen with a big silver bucket, drew forth a bottle of white wine — Omar Khayyam,

article by p.d. jack

non-vintage — and carried on as if it did not taste like Macedonian boot scrapings.

"Yes I know. You are well-trained in close driving — a hairs-breadth at high speed — and in being caught two out on the wrong side of a mountain road and still avoiding the oncoming truck. You have a lot of practice," I replied.

"A lot of practice with trouble. We are used to problems."

He scooped up some sliced onion and herbs with a small torn triangle of flat bread, and shovelled a salted sardine into the morsel. Bits of fish circled his teeth as he added: "Not that we enjoy problems, we just know how to handle them."

Outside the Arab was collecting his melons from the gutter, as other passersby helped him, and helped themselves; the traffic continued by and over the mess, the occasional piece of rind skidding out from beneath the flesh-squelching tyres and ricocheting over the footpath into tables set on the footpath, at which groups of men played backgammon, sipped coffee, puffed on their nargilehs, or added their commentary to the noisy babble of downtown Alexandria.

My guest, Khaddam, was one of those effeminate men who have an edge — the flicker of the eyes, a sudden coldness in their speech, a momentary stiffening of expression — an edge that can frighten.

His hair was overdone. A big black bouffant like a Russian fur hat, or a wig. He wore a tight-waisted pastel suit, done up; a handkerchief flowed from his breast pocket.

There's a man like him in Mackay, Queensland. The same watery eyes, false hair, tight suits. When he moved to Mackay the crime rate (from drunken driving to assault to drugs to jewel and bank theft) soared. He had been run out of Sydney by the Mafia.

Khaddam twisted his wrist and set his fine chin upon his outstretched fingers, and said what this other man had said to me one day in Mackay.

"I don't know why you think I have any story to tell. I am just a businessman. You don't work for the *Financial Times*, and I am just a small businessman."

Small, but flash enough to wear a big diamond ring and a thick gold bracelet.

I had been told in Beirut that if I wanted to arrange the sale of contraband — Scotch, drugs, girlie books, pocket calculators — I should go to a certain barber's shop just off Rue Al Qaid Gohar, just up from the tram stop, and ask there for Khaddam. I had eventually found it, nestled beneath a soaring baroque archway which led through a block of balconied flats to a puddled, cobbled alley where donkeys nuzzled at piles of rotting vegetable refuse.

It was like barber shops used to be before hairdressers went unisex: a belly-dancer calendar, the smell of bay rum, a book of lottery tickets, a radio blaring. The barber was using non-electric clippers. I left my name and hotel with him, and Khaddam invited himself for lunch the next day, selecting a hotel dining-room overlooking Zaglul Square, where an early President of Egypt casts his eternally blind bronze eyes upon the old harbor, and the rumble of electric trams is bass to the honking tenor of the motor traffic.

As per the Code of Ethics that adorns the back of the annual report of the Australian Journalists' Association, I informed Khaddam that I was less interested in doing business than I was in learning how he conducted his business.

"Hmm," he said, and placed his finger to his cheek.

"You have come from Baalbek?" he asked.

"Yes."

"There is still no fighting there?"

"No."

"But many check points?"

"About half a dozen along the road between Baalbek and Chtaura."

"Yes, too many. We no longer do business with Baalbek. Could you excuse me a minute?"

It was like barber shops used to be before hairdressers went unisex: a belly-dancer calendar, the smell of bay rum, a book of lottery tickets.

He dabbed his mouth with the white damask, and walked out with his Cartier men's purse, but leaving his cigarettes and gold lighter as covenant of his return.

The waiter brought my grilled pigeon, and then carried a message to a man sitting a few tables away. He was one of a few solitary diners, and looked like Ernie Kovacs in *Our Man In Havana*, without his sense of humor. But then many people in Alexandria look like characters out of a spy drama. The gentleman with the young lady in the white blouse was obviously a Swiss arms merchant taking time off with some Ambassador's secretary; the three men over there, unshaven, one of them decidedly scruffy, were undoubtedly Libyans planning assassination; the woman by the window was a Russian, I heard her accent.

Later I meet the arms merchant at my hotel. He is, in fact, a bank manager; the girl is his daughter, a teacher. The "Libyans" are probably plasterers.

I was watching a fishing boat out in the harbor lay a couple of hundred yards of net when I was tapped on the shoulder by the "policeman".

"Your friend is not returning, Mr Phillip."

"He's not?"

"No. There is no story. There are problems — you can't help them. There is no story."

He was about 45, round, balding, with tinted glasses and a moustache. His suit was plain dark grey, but well-made. When he was at the table it was easy to imagine him in uniform behind a desk, and now he was standing over me, a short man with beady eyes, I no longer need imagine.

"This is a police matter Mr Phillip. You are leaving soon. Don't concern yourself, unless you wish to become involved in a time-wasting and expensive process.

"Go home. There is no story."

I had come a long way, but it did have the ring of a reasonable suggestion — going home that is. This man, by trying not to, was offering the alternative: stay here and you'll discover something. I knew that as soon as he said there was no story. There always is when they say there isn't. Just as when people say there is, there isn't. Usually.

There was definitely a story, but what I did not know, and would not know, was whether this man was honest or a crook. And it would cost — too much — to find out.

•

It's so hard to know what is *really* going on. Most of us mind our own business, and as long as that's humming, well and good. If you start asking questions, even of yourself, you get confused.

What are all these trucks doing? I asked myself as the mini-bus rumbled across the little bridge. The creek was the mighty Jordan River — you'd have trouble drowning a cat in it. But it was the boundary separating two sworn enemies, Israel and King Hussein's Jordan, and Jordan, like other Arab states, is not supposed to have truck with Israel. So what were all these trucks doing?

They were cutting through the hypocrisy of politics, that's what they were doing. They were asserting the primacy of trade over the ideals of the fanatics. They were carting Israeli vegetables across the border to be sold in Jordan, as simple as that.

Theoretically, of course, the tomatoes and oranges were grown by Arabs in the occupied West Bank, which by some international fiction is not considered part of Israel. All the Arab traders do is just replace the Hebrew labels with Arabic labels, and Arab honor is maintained. Everybody knows what's going on, except perhaps the poor buggers who aren't members of the ruling elites, which means 99 percent of the population.

Same same this Claytonsville — the border you have when not having a border. I juggle two passports to avoid getting any stamp indicating I may have used this "border", which is enough to stop you getting into any other Arab country. But the Jordanian copper stamps a bit of paper instead, explaining that as it isn't a border, he can't stamp my passport.

Okay by me chum.

What a place, eh? Institutionalised deceit. A week before, King Hussein had sentenced to death for treason any West Bank Arab politician found co-operating with the Israeli Government. Short of giving the murderous fanatics carte blanche, it's only rhetoric.

They're great on rhetoric these Arabs. Barely a day goes by without some international conference condemning Israeli aggression, without some odious toad calling for a holy war to expel the Jews from the sacred Arab land. They pass resolution after resolution, about which absolutely nothing is done until the next conference, when the resolution is again passed overwhelmingly, and then the delegates — or at least those who haven't had their government changed in their absence — return home to ignore the matter until next time.

Out of the Jordan Valley (lowest place in the world, they claim) the road climbs to Amman, a quiet little city not unlike Wagga Wagga.

I have had the misfortune to make this comparison to two Australian consular officials in the Middle East, both whom asked, "And what's wrong with Wagga?". Both were Wagga boys.

I'm in Amman to get a Syrian visa, which is a chilling experience. The man behind the counter sits in a dark room saying nothing, looking at you coldly out of his one good eye, as if sizing you up for a torture chamber.

A display case beside the counter, which in normal consular offices would contain pretty views of the country's tourists spots, has half a dozen black and white photographs of machine gunned and fire-charred corpses. Very choice.

From Amman the road winds through low hills past goat herds and stoney fields to a huge valley, into which we descend. Later we drop into yet another huge valley. Back to the lowest spot on earth again? No, only Syria.

A short cut into Damascus takes us past a big building surrounded by a high fence, protected every 50 yards by heavily-armed young blokes in jeans and flak jackets. It's the headquarters of the Muhabarat, the Syrian secret police. They're about as secret as a fart in an empty lift.

They look very mean, but I smile as I remember a joke.

The Syrian Army and the Muhabarat held a competition to see who was best. Both sent groups into the desert to catch a gazelle. The Army captured one within a day. Later, on the second day, the Muhabarat team eventually appeared at the oasis leading a donkey, which they were beating. The leader of the Muhabarat team was bellowing: "Admit you're a gazelle, admit you're a gazelle!"

From Damascus I catch a multiple-hire cab through the anti-Lebanon mountain range over the border and on to Chtaura, where I grab a couple of beers and a car to Baalbek, up the Beqaa Valley. As usual, the car is filled with international drug traders.

The afternoon sun warms the jasmine growing over the verandah so that a faint perfume sweetens the late winter warmth. Through the giant Roman columns of monumental temple ruins you can see the snow-capped mountains of Lebanon looming above the wide flat plain that stretches out like an eager woman, waiting to be planted. A tractor hauls irrigation pipes by the Syrian soldiers snoozing in their sandbagged sentry box, the fixed machine gun pointing peacefully across the deserted ruins.

I need some smokes so I walk up the street to the market. On the way a car pulls up beside me.

"Come on. I'm from the family Jaffa."

I ignore him, but he pulls the Peugeot in front of me and jumps out — a stocky young man, about 19, in jeans and expensive casual shirt.

"All right, take me to the mukhtar," I say.

"You want smoke hashish?" he asks.

A short cut into Damascus takes us past a big building surrounded by a high fence. It's the headquarters of the Syrian secret police.

"No, take me to the mukhtar," which means "take me to your leader".

A gang of youths walk by and the drug pusher co-opts one to act as translator. He is more Arab looking: dark with black curly hair and fine features. He is a Dendash, from the hills near Hermel, further north near Syria. Like the family Jaffa, the Dendash grows hashish.

They ask questions like policemen when I tell them I want to see the family boss. A car stops near us, and the passenger gets out to change seats with the driver. It is a crude way of checking me out.

They take me down the road to the south, towards Britel where, I am told, the mukhtar lives. A big white Cadillac roars past. I ask who it is and Jaffa and Dendash pointedly ignore the question. We turn off before the Britel turn-off and call at a small half-finished cottage to see Jaffa's girlfriend. The father, in a long robe, coat and kaffiyah, sits on the floor. The mother brings coffee then stands at the door staring at me, her expression a mixture of horror and disapproval — of what I have no idea. Young Jaffa talks in a corner to his girlfriend, dressed demurely like a sweet virgin, which undoubtedly she is.

I ask a few questions. The old man shakes his head and waves his finger gently from side to side. Universal for No. He smiles. The mother's glare increases. I'm as comfortable as a cow on the slaughterhouse race. We leave and drive off towards the hills. The car behind us is the same car that swapped drivers.

The family Jaffa is very hospitable. It so likes having guests to stay, especially Europeans, that it tends towards kidnapping. At any one time there are usually one or two Europeans in the hillside villages or town enclave as willing prisoners of the family Jaffa. I am asked if I want to meet some. Not particularly. To do so could take two days and the Europeans, more than likely here to do business, aren't very forthcoming to passing journalists, especially when they're in the same room as a tonne of dope. Last time I was here a German pulled a gun on me to convince me of his desire for anonymity.

Speaking of guns, I notice the following car has gone since we turned off the mountain road and took the back way into town. Instead there are two blokes on a motor cycle, the passenger holding an over-and-under ten gauge. They slow down to let us pass, then take up our slipstream. We pass a small settlement and are back in the open. The motorbike pulls slowly up beside us, the shotgun peering into the car.

"Hunters?" I inquire hopefully.

"Yes," says Dendash.

"Ha," laughs Jaffa. "In Lebanon they hunt people."

Which fact I am aware of, and his reminding me of it does little to reassure me.

I say I'm a friend of Ali Jaffa.

"We are all Ali Jaffa," he says.

"If they're not called Mohammet," Dendash adds.

"Or Mohammet Ali," I say.

"It is the name we use when doing business," Jaffa explains.

We drive past a big pink two-storey house with a couple of flash American cars in the courtyard. Jaffa sees I recognise it and asks if I know it. I am non-committal. I feel like I'm being shown around by the Queensland Police Force, the questions they are throwing at me.

"That house. It is my house. Come."

If I do, I know I will be forced to drink innumerable cups of bitter coffee and sweet tea while sitting around a mob of old men smiling and nodding at me, which may be very diverting for them (sitting around drinking tea and coffee is their regular occupation), but there is the likelihood the European visitor may find time dragging somewhat; and the visitor can find himself accepting the offer of fuming hashish cigarettes to relieve the boredom.

If he does accept the slightly mint-tasting drug, he may notice that those about him rarely indulge themselves, although he may also find difficulty in reconciling this observation with the fact that his hosts are displaying palpable symptoms of cannabis poisoning: sitting around doing nothing, eating sweets, and occasionally breaking the

silence with manic arguments. Perhaps these men don't need to actively ingest cannabis because there are enough tetra-hydro-cannabinoids in the atmosphere to keep the THC level of their blood at a high level.

If you work all morning scraping marijuana flowers through fine sieves it is likely you will breathe in sufficient cannabis juice to reach that state of cannabis poisoning called "being whacked"; the same may be suggested if you keep 30 or 40 25kg bags of hashish powder, unsealed, in your living-room. The Jaffa family, responsible they say for some 5000 acres of hashish cultivation, does both.

However, it must be noted that within the social habits of Arab peoples the practice of sitting around, with or without tea and coffee, with or without hashish fumes, is a very popular one.

As the young Jaffa explains: "If you want to do business with the Arab people, do not set appointments for a certain hour and then expect them to be kept." Nine am means any time in the morning, or before lunch, and three o'clock is any time up to bedtime. So waiting around is a well-practised art.

So I refuse his offer to stay at that big house. Primarily on the grounds that I don't believe him when he claims it is "his", and also because the lad is quite untrustworthy. He is a punk. A half-smart pushy little gum-chewing hair-smoothing punk in high-heeled riding boots. He has ski racks on his car which could only be for show, since the car was a late model car and Lebanon has not had a chair-lift going for more than six years. He is nothing more than a salesman trying to entice me into a drug stupor. He offers me unlimited cannabis, unlimited cocaine, and unlimited smack. I can think of nothing less pleasant than being completely stoned in his company. Drugs are not like drink, where after a certain stage even a dog in the gutter can be stimulating company; drugs such as hashish and cocaine heighten awareness, and who needs to be more aware of the creep?

I realise I should have visited the big pink house. It is the mansion of the enclave, is owned by a senior member of the family Jaffa and, as I recall from my earlier visit, is a sort of vetting post for visitors. But I recall the house has an inner sanctum, which takes many hours, even days, to penetrate. And once penetrated, what do you find? More old Arabs sitting around drinking tea or coffee, nodding and smiling.

If I was going to talk to these men I needed an interpreter, and that was not this young Jaffa. He is an encyclopaedia salesman, with the added benefit that his client would be drugged.

But what is he selling?

The Lebanese are famous for inventing two things: the alphabet, and trade. They are still pretty hot with trade. Anything capable of being bought and sold can be found in Beirut, and Lebanese traders can be found in every city of the world. Despite Lebanon having been at war with itself for the past seven years, it is still adding to its gold reserves.

So when a Lebanese punk comes out of the blue and starts calling himself your "friend", and offers you a car and a room in a villa in the hills, and some pleasant female company, one cannot help but form a suspicion that there could be an ulterior motive. The Lebanese *are* very friendly, and wonderful hosts — but they don't run charities. The family Jaffa does not grow hashish, nor import Turkish heroin, merely for the delectation of wandering Australian tourists.

Nor do they make any money selling one-ounce deals.

The basic crop of the Beqaa Valley is hashish. For miles as you drive up the valley the fields of cannabis stretch from both sides of the road across the plain to the mountains. It provides a livelihood for thousands of people, and indirectly provides the prosperity of the Valley's 80,000 inhabitants. Hashish also earns several million dollars of foreign exchange a year

The basic crop of the Beqaa Valley is hashish. For miles as you drive up the valley, the fields of cannabis stretch from both sides of the road.

(although much of this is in gold or kept in Switzerland).

Most of the stuff goes to Egypt, shipped in 100-tonne lots. Before the war, bulk buyers took delivery at the wharf in Tripoli or at the smaller ports, where the hashish had been transported by carriers contracted to the Lebanese Customs. The Customs officers are still prepared to supervise loading, but there are now too many other groups involved between Baalbek and the coast.

While the prevailing anarchy has allowed the acreage under crop to expand, even unto the roadsides, it has made transport of the finished product much more difficult. I counted 13 checkpoints between Beirut and Baalbek before I gave up. Although all but one of these checkpoints is either Syrian Army or Lebanese Army (the other being a strange group of masked men selling lottery tickets), a smuggler would have to come to some arrangement with the commanders of each military division responsible for those checkpoints. Just because the 4th Syrian Mechanised Infantry Brigade is paid off and lets you through does not mean the 2nd Commando Battalion won't bust you.

The $40,000 or so needed for a tonne is boosted by the $1000 plus slings needed to ensure every checkpoint has been geed-up to let your truck roll on through. And even then there's no guarantee. A hold up at one point after a change of shift — or worse, after a change of command.

Politics, too, can be a bastard, as one driver recalls.

"I pulled up at the check point and mentioned the General's name. The soldier said that General was a traitor, and had been shot. I offered him a hundred dollars and he dragged me out of the cabin and threatened to shoot me. I think it cost us 20 or 30 thousand Lebanese pounds to sort it out.

"We missed the boat, and had to sit around Tripoli for weeks; during this time a lot of shooting started there, and one of our main men was blown up by a Katyusha.

"This bloody war. It's just impossible to do business."

Still, they roll them out. Problems are never insurmountable, just nuisances. In the early hours of the morning in Baalbek you can hear the trucks grinding down the highway, fully laden. And they're not carrying only onions.

Baalbek hasn't always been the centre of the Lebanese dope industry. Thousands of years ago it was a major centre on the trade routes linking Asia Minor with Egypt and Arabia.

The Phoenicians, from whom the Lebanese claim descent, built a temple there; the Greeks added to it, and so did the Romans, and later the Moslem conquerors. The giant ruins are still there. During the 1950s and 1960s an international arts festival was held every year on the ruins.

"There was the Bolshoi Ballet, Ella Fitzgerald, the Royal Shakespeare Company — even your Australian Ballet performed," said a man who remembered.

"They used to stay here at this hotel," he said, gesturing around at the Hotel Palmyra, at which I was the only guest.

It is a beautiful hotel, built on top of an old Roman amphitheatre. His guest book reads like a Who's Who of the 20th Century.

So I'm sitting in the saloon, leafing through a 1959 *Paris Match,* thinking about Haile Selassie, Jean Paul Sartre, Jean Cocteau, Somerset Maugham, the Prince of Wales, and looking at the rich red carpet. An ancient retainer brings a coffee. Somerset Maugham wraps a dressing gown around him and shuffles off to Jean Cocteau's room as Haile Selassie enters to regale us with tales of the birds he shot this evening. Quail for dinner?

Reality: it's a poor thin steak. I eat alone. The *maitre d'* at my elbow represses a brandied burp. The chef packs a 45 beneath his white coat. It is dusk, and the streets outside are deserted. No one ventures out after dark. Not without a frisson anyway.

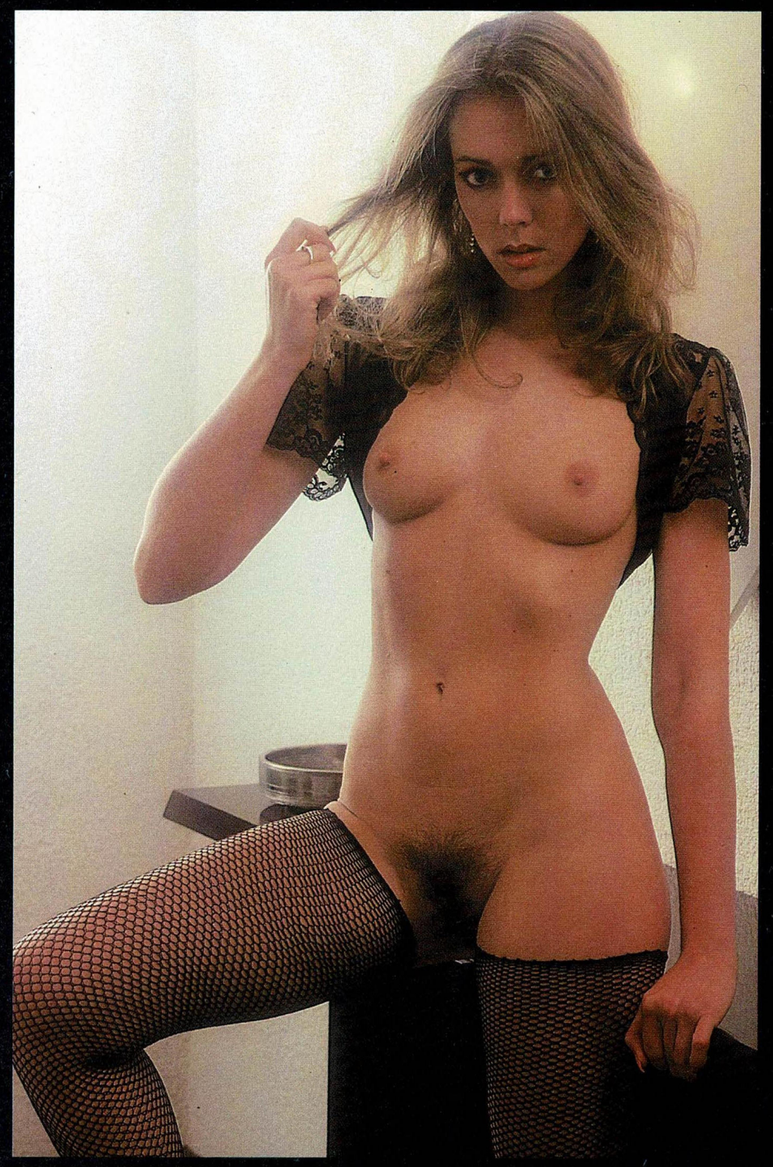
Up the street a liquor shop has its door shut, but light and a slight babble creeps from the cracks as a few of the boys sit around sipping Scotch and arac. A Syrian sentry playfully lines me up. A big Buick roars out of an alley, and then all is silent

(continued on page 134)

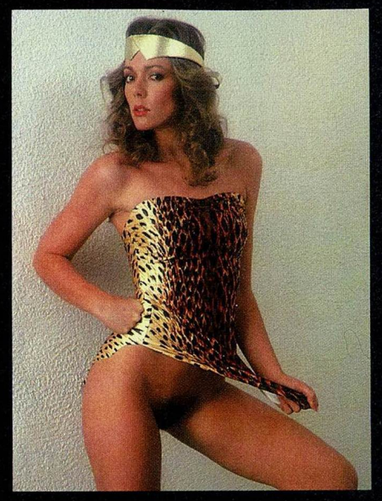
SANDI

Sandi Shepherd is young, sweet, wise and worldly. She's a Playmate for all seasons — and obvious reasons! And at just 21 years of age, our wide-eyed Miss September has been on the move almost since the day she was born.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY
RICO METTBACH



Sandi was born in Canada, but came to Australia when she was only 10 days old. She spends part of each year visiting her relatives in Canada, and her parents, who live in the Bahamas but spend a few months of each year in Australia.

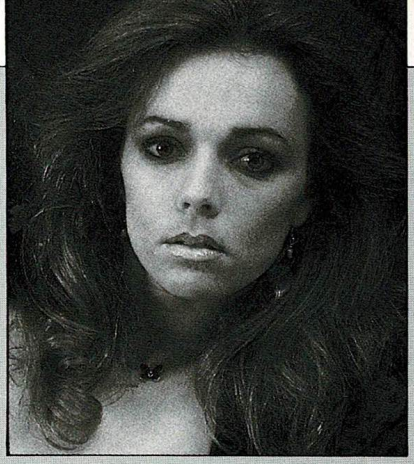


After gaining a commercial arts degree and working in a color laboratory, Sandi recently embarked on a modelling career. "Becoming a model, and maybe later an actress, is what I've always wanted to do," she says. "And so was posing for PLAYBOY."

MISS SEPTEMBER

PLAYBOY'S PLAYMATE OF THE MONTH

Sandi Shepherd



PLAYMATE DATA SHEET

NAME: Sandi Shepherd

BUST: 35 WAIST: 24 HIPS: 35

HEIGHT: 5'5" WEIGHT: 8st. SIGN: Virgo

BIRTH DATE: 22/9/60 BIRTH PLACE: Canada

AMBITIONS: To enjoy life & to become a successful model or actress.

TURN-ONS: Puppies, honesty, the outback, rain on a tin roof, expensive cars, a bubble bath.

TURN-OFFS: Cruelty to animals, pain, liars, creepy crawlies, being rushed.

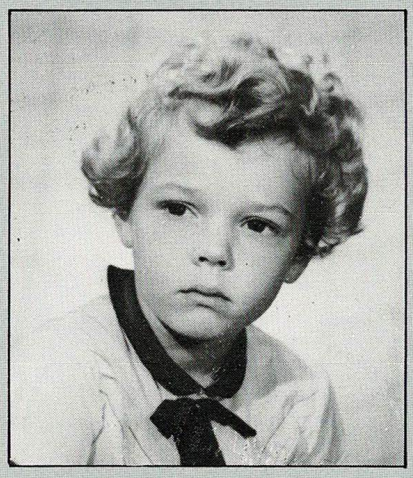
FAVORITE BOOKS: "The Hobbit", "Wuthering Heights" "Thorn Birds."

FAVORITE PERFORMERS: Clint Eastwood, Charles Bronson, Dustin Hoffman, Mia Farrow.

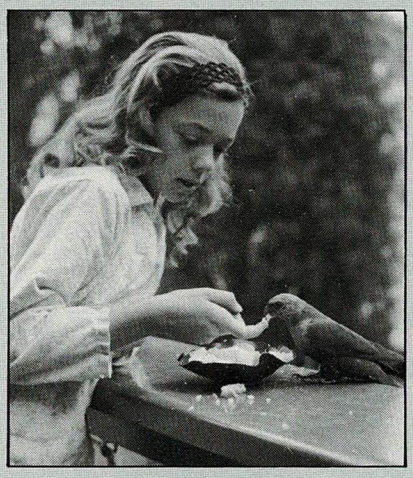
FAVORITE SPORTS: Horse riding, dancing, swimming.

IDEAL MAN: Honest, kind, loves animals, understanding, the man I live with.

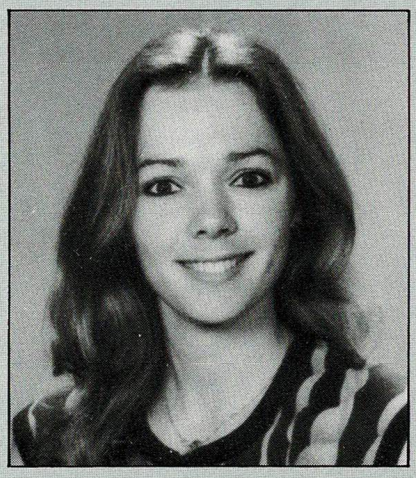
SECRET FANTASY: It's a secret!



5 years.



11 years
Loving Nature



19 years
My mother loves a smile.

PLAYBOY'S PARTY JOKES

Our Unabashed Dictionary describes *virginal spinster* as a sealed biddy.

My next-door neighbor threatened to take me to court because her husband became sexually aroused when I sunbathed nude," the girl told a friend.

"So what did you do?" she was asked.

"I put up a hedge against inflation."

Maybe I'm not the world's most expert lover," the young man muttered to the girl in the motel-room bed, "but things would bloody well improve if you'd grind your arse instead of your teeth . . ."

When a horny mountain man named Rollo
Asked a maid as they kissed in the hollow,
"Did you know that my dong
Is twelve inches long?"
She replied, "That's a hard one to swallow!"

With palimony suits becoming more prevalent in the US, it's not surprising to hear that a deserted homosexual can sue for GAY ABANDON!

After consulting his local clergyman, the young man promised to give up excessive masturbation.

"Save it for when you get married," the minister advised him.

Several weeks later, the clergyman passed the lad on the street and asked how he was going.

"Pretty well, so far," the young man enthusiastically replied, "I've managed to save 500mls."

I had a date last night with a fascinating bloke," reported the attractive typist. "He's one of those actors who don't speak but just use gestures and facial expressions."

"Oh really," commented the office wag, "I suppose it was a mime-blowing experience."

On the way home from a date, a naive young girl asked her boyfriend what the couple was up to in the back of a parked van.

"They're tossing salad," he replied. "Would you like to have a go?"

When she finally arrived home, her angry father asked why she was so late.

"I've been tossing salad," she explained.

"Oh yeah," he fumed, "and I suppose that's mayonnaise running down your leg!"

How about a round of applause for the 90-year-old man who crept into his doctor's surgery and mumbled that he wanted his sex drive lowered.

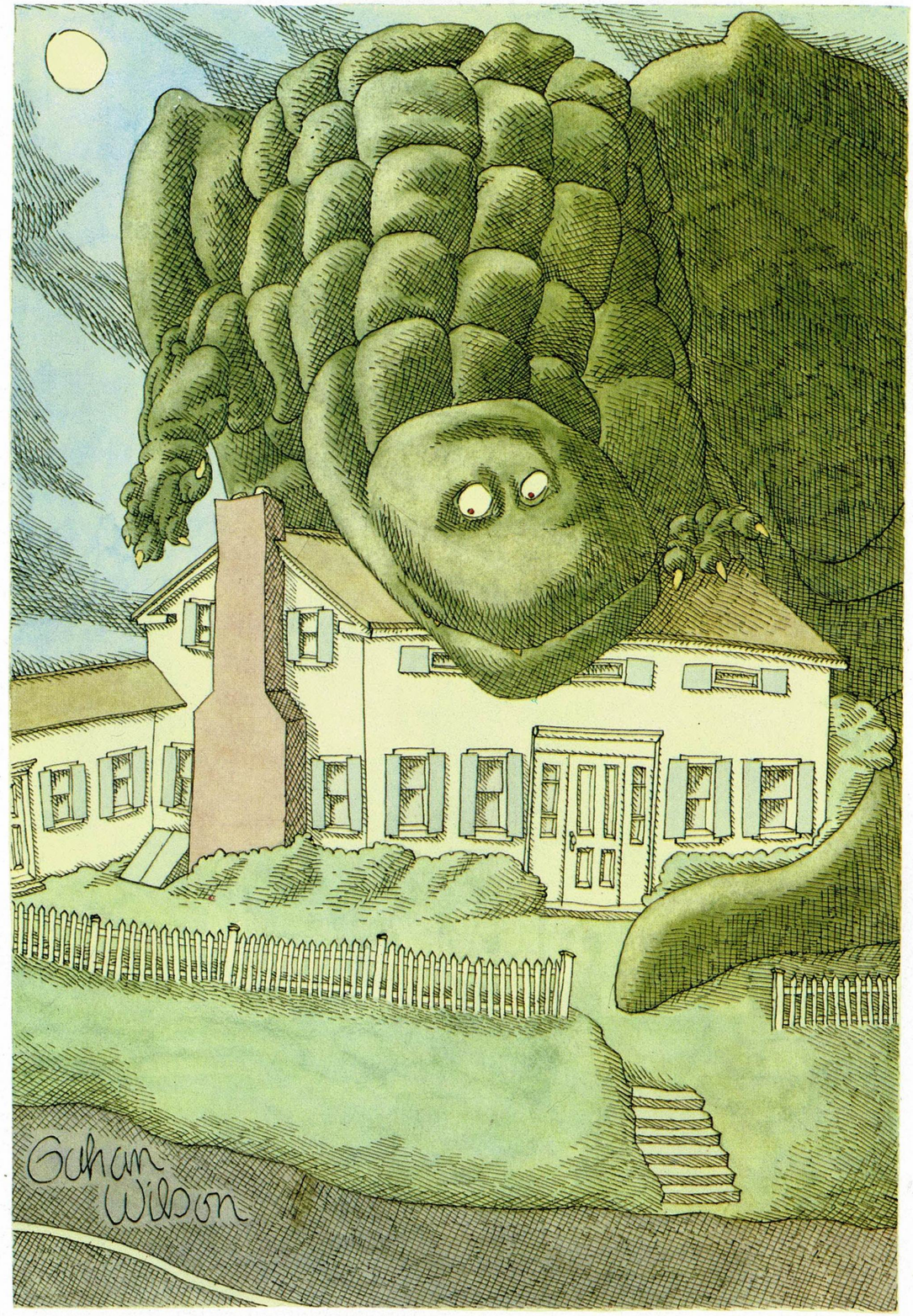
"Lowered?" replied the incredulous doctor. "Are you crazy or something? It's all in your mind!"

"Yeah, I know," the old fellow sheepishly replied, "but that's why I want it lowered!"

How's business tonight?" one prostitute asked another as their paths crossed.

"Slim prickings," was the response.

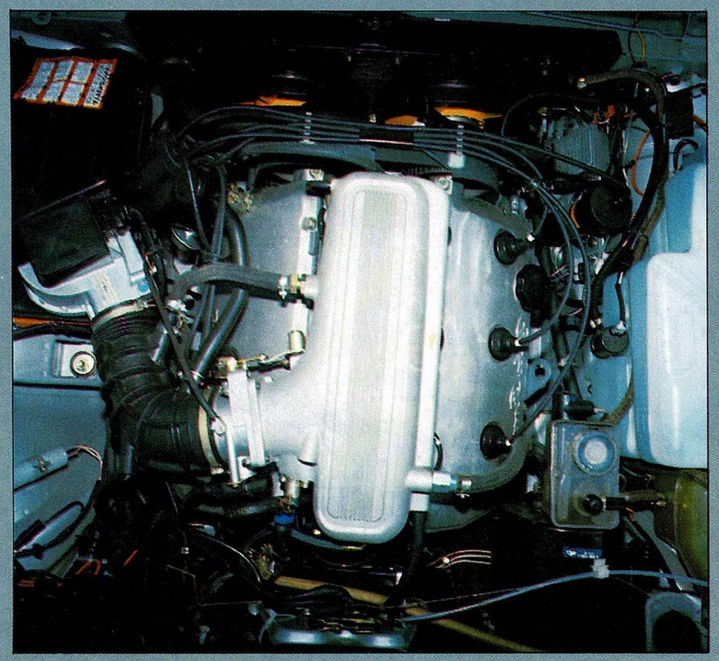
Heard a good one lately? Send it to Party Jokes Editor, Australian PLAYBOY, P.O. Box 746, Darlinghurst, 2010. We'll pay $25 for each joke used.



"There! I heard it again!"

motoring by rob luck

SIX



APPEAL

where better to test the alfa gtv v6 than on its home ground

SAN GOTTARDO, SWITZERLAND, MONDAY: The Alfa snout pokes out into the sunshine at the north end of the 20km Gotthard Pass all-weather tunnel, and I work the car up through the gears downhill past a huge crocodile of crawling transporters. I have just grabbed fourth at 130km/h when a light twin aircraft suddenly pops over

Alfa shoehorned the compact 2.5 litre V6 under the GTV hood without overbalancing its perfect balance (above), putting the car ahead of the opposition down the high-speed autostrada and through classic climb-and-wind country (right).

the edge of the autobahn guardrail from a small airport alongside. The whites of the pilot's eyes are almost visible as he makes formation with the Alfa, and tucks the landing gear for the long run down the autobahn set between vertical rockwalls on each side — his only way out of the valley. A few seconds later I pull fifth gear at 6250rpm which reads 190km/h and edge past under his belly. By the bottom of the hill, the speedo reads 245km/h. By the end of the valley, the light twin is almost a spec in the mirror, suspended perhaps 50ft above the autobahn.

European autobahns put motoring into different perspectives. Short city-to-city sectors can frequently be covered in smaller timespans than in high-velocity commercial jets. In the right car it is possible to average travel distances at speeds of 160km/h or more. Easily. And safely. In the right car. The Alfa Romeo Alfetta GTV 2.5 litre V6 is such a car. Alfa's sensational new light-weight, powerful hemi-headed DOHC, 60 degree Vee pumps 160 (DIN) bhp of new life into the successful Giorgio Giugiaro Ital-design coupe, now into its sixth year of production. Matched with upgraded brakes and suspension, it transforms the darling of the fashionable boulevards of Rome and Florence into one of the fastest, most efficient high-speed touring automobiles available in all of Europe. Quicker than the hot BMW 3-bodies which have an enviable reputation on the Continent. But better yet, faster than the 92-series Porsches, even the Turbo, and a match for good 3-litre 911s. It is a car that is entitled to hang out there in the fast lane, lights blazing, clearing a path among the scuttling hordes of GTI Golfs, the cruiser Mercs, and the high-speed small fry. Only the true exotics — Lamborghini, Ferrari, 911 Turbo Porsche and company — are its master.

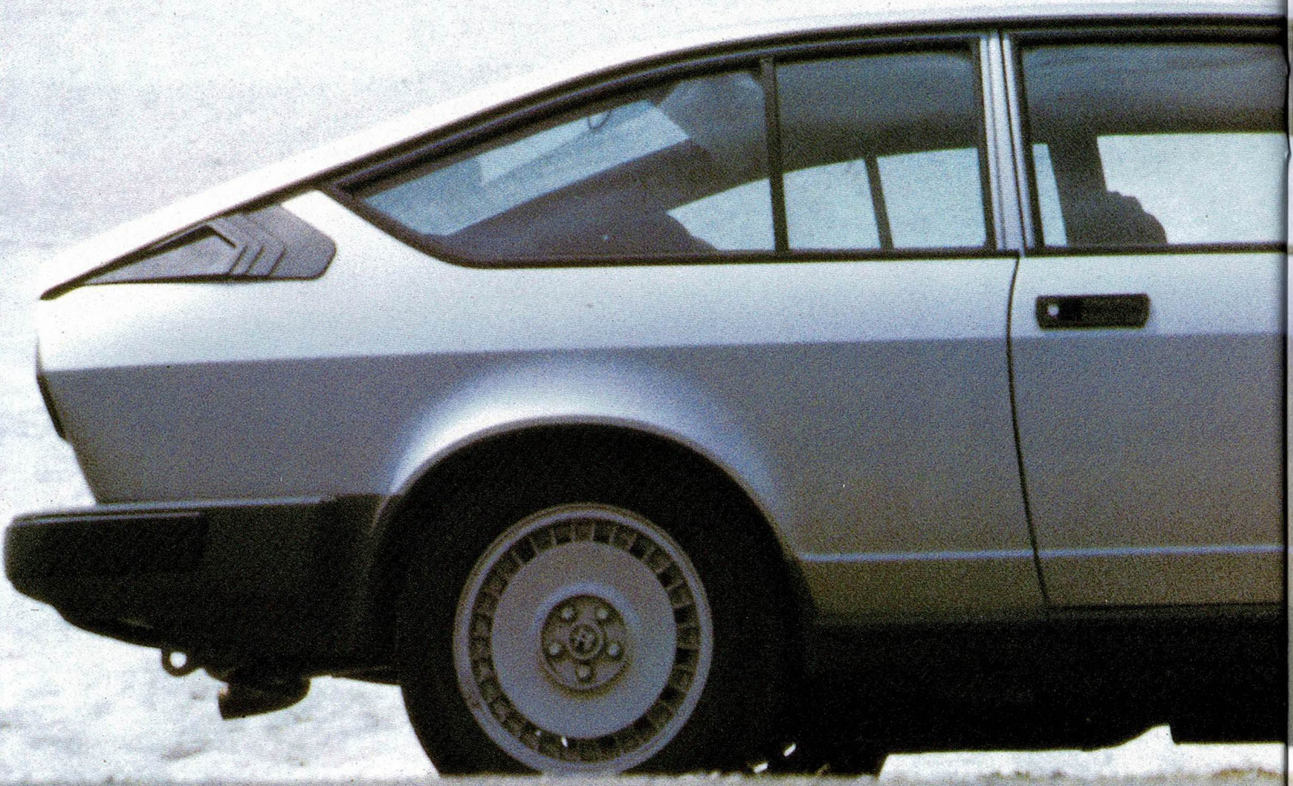
To Australians, it's a remote and almost irrelevant prospect. Hobbled by blinded, blundering safety legislators, a tour down our own autobahn equivalents in such a machine is an invitation to frustration. Or a ticket. For God's sake — 110km/h on a divided four-lane in 1982!

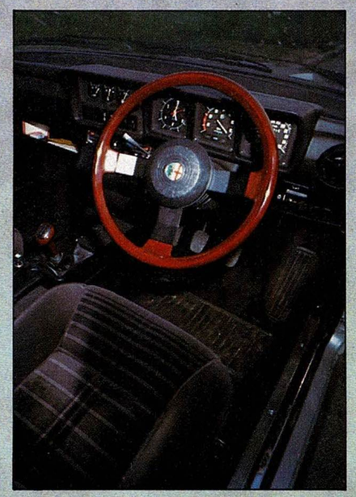
German autobahns represent 1.5 percent of the nation's roads, carry more than 25 percent of the traffic, and account for less than six percent of the total accidents. End of discussion. Except to say that roads like this produce cars like the Alfa GTV V6. Apart from the top end shove, the V6-engined Alfa has head-jerking punch through the gears. It gets to our national legal limit in 7.5 seconds from the kerb, which is as fast as a BMW Alpina three or five body, and covers the standing 400m in less than 16 seconds.

This sort of raw grunt is curbed by vicious brakes — Alfa's legendary set of four discs, inboard at the rear, bolted-up to the transaxle assembly that lies between the rear wheels to balance the weight of the car at a "perfect" 50/50 front rear which is unchanged from the previous DOHC four cylinder car — the V6 is 3kg heavier, but so is the dual-plate clutch in the rear. A merciless thumping down 2000 vertical metres of snaking switchback on a backroad above the Brenner Pass wasn't sufficient to fade them out.

●

TURIN, ITALY, EARLIER THE SAME DAY: There is a new game here in the always chaotic traffic. A sort of inverted Space Invaders. The trick is to hold back a few car lengths from "the grid" at traffic lights, get a rolling start, go on the red — the cross





The subtle V6 indicators are bonnet power bulge, disc wheels, interior changes (bottom left) including revised instruments. Giulietta sedan (centre left), performs bizarre manoeuvres on the Balocco test track. New Sportiva Mark II (left) is the top end of Alfa's local sedan range. Photography by Rob Luck.

traffic comes through on the red as well. Cut a weaving course through the intersection, score near-misses, delete for actual contact, bigggest "hit" is making the Polizia on crossing-duty run for the median strip. Tally your scores by the number of times his whistle blows. Under no circumstances stop.

●

Motoring in Italy is engaged with a sense of humor. Yet it is a deadly business. Roads carry perhaps 20 times their designed traffic loads so motorists improvise with the rules. Multiply lane count by four — a good three-laner will get you 12 or 13 Ritmos or Bambinos abreast. Maybe more. Not a problem down the straights, but Italian cities are noted for their Piazzas, so formation flying around curves is tougher than stunting for the Red Arrows.

●

BALOCCO, NEAR MILAN, THE PREVIOUS THURSDAY: There is a section of straight on the high-speed loop of Alfa Romeo's test track that is widened out and marked with lines and dots. On this day, a number of witches hats are in place, forming an artifical chicane. An Alfa Romeo Giulietta is signalling its intention to attack the esses by getting up to pace a kilometre or so down the track. A small group of observers is huddled against the fresh spring wind, behind some guardrail on a big mound 400 metres back from the track — considered at the extremity of the normal accident radius when this thing goes wrong. The Guilietta bores into view, exhaust trumpeting a shift to fourth, and the little box hurls into the gate, lurches right, left, right, breaks traction, slides out, smacks two cones, flicking them high in the air. Giancarlo Desperado gets it all straightened out just before a side access road, which he then tries to enter by executing a handbrake slide. Successfully.

●

The manoeuvre is not common to auto-company test tracks anywhere else in the world. Especially at this velocity. In Italy, at Alfa Romeo, it is considered standard fare for vehicles to demonstrate total stability under such conditions.

But there is another revealing test at Balocco. Near to the basecamp, there is a section of roadway with high concrete kerbs. During the durability programs, test drivers are detailed to drive all-model Alfas up and down the kerbs. All day. Yes, Alfas are built to withstand *every* kind of normal Italian driving situation.

One of those is *not* lunking along at low speed with the transmission in a high-number gear. Italians generally don't do that. The vehicle is usually nose-up, nostrils flaring, or squirming under brakes. Strange then that this Italian vehicle is so tractable in the top slots. Fourth gear has a remarkable accelerative range — it pulls hard from 30km/h to 180km/h. If you can find a Viale not infested with buzzing Bambinos, it will truck along at 30-60km/h in either fourth or fifth. Yet fifth, an overdrive gear, is a real charger ratio above 190km/h on the autostrada. On the flat, against a Porsche 911SC I got the car up from 190 to 220km/h with a long lead. And it ran on to 235km/h. Yet it was a smooth gear around town and also pulled usefully at speeds more relevant to Australia — from 80-120km/h. Not bad when you consider the third gear in the box will already get you to that velocity (130km/h at 6000rpm). Both fourth and fifth will motivate the car without driveline rumble, from as low as 20km/h, — fourth will even do it on a slight upgradient. From a starting speed of 40km/h, fifth will pull the car over a kilometre in 35.6 secs compared with 31 secs in fourth.

●

MILANO, SUNDAY: My guide is auditioning for Bruno Giacomelli's job, hurling his GTV through the back streets ahead of mine as if competing in the warm-up event for the San Marino Grand Prix. The corner goes right, there are cars in the right lane, the car ahead sweeps out, the back shifts,

Perhaps it is hard for the average Australian to understand, but skilful motoring is a way of life in Italy. It's a commitment to personal motivation.

tail steps out. I see the front tyre angling out beyond the wheel arch as he winds-on opposite lock, turns the car into the slide, back wheels whisping smoke. It is almost straight when he passes the Carabinieri, tucked in front of a truck, out of sight. He is gone, he must be gone! The Alfa up front snaps straight, I am now up behind, just to the rear of the police car — another Alfa, a special-tune Alfetta sedan. It is hard to believe — the two officers are leaning out the window, waving their arms excitedly, yelling the Latin equivalent of "yahoo" or "go for it". My guide looks over his shoulder, almost apprehensively. Another cheer, and they wave him on.

●

Perhaps it is hard for the average Australian to understand, but skilful motoring is a way of life in Italy.

It is a commitment to personal motivation that permeates every area of life in Italy, and it is responsible not only for motoring styles, but vehicle design. At the peak of this enthusiasm is the passion for motor sport — almost a fanaticism in Italy, a phenomenon that brought more than 100,000 spectators to the tiny principality of San Marino for the Imola Grand Prix this year — more than double the promoters' projected figure considering that half the teams stayed away due to the Formula One dispute. For the enthusiastic Italians, it was enough that Ferrari and Alfa were there. There was the over-riding impression that they would come to see billycarts do battle — as long as they bore the sign of Ferrari's Prancing Horse or the Quadrifoglio of Alfa Romeo.

One of the events that brought them screaming to their feet was the Alfasud Trophy Race — an emotion-stirrer for the Grand Prix, run early on raceday. In the event, which precedes key Fl rounds, at least 20 identical hard-tuned Alfasud Sprints contested the curves and straights of this pretty mountain circuit in the most spectacular fashion. It is supported by Alfa, and is almost as much a part of Fl racing as Alfa's Formula One team.

Alfa Romeo's competition manager, Mario Felici, Managing Director of Auto-delta, is there at Imola to confirm the company's commitment to racing — to Formula One, to the Alfasud Trophy Race series, and to the new effort — Alfa's assault on the European Touring Car Titles. It is an historic move for Alfa — its first real attempt at factory level to wrest the world's most important touring car title from the traditional competition houses built around BMW, Lancia, Ford and Porsche vehicles. And already the Alfas are winning, staggering the European experts with their full complement of performance, handling and braking. The vehicle base is the machine you see here — the Alfetta GTV V6: in the new European Group Two trim (Group A) under which the Championship is now contested. Similar mechanical tune to the vehicles which contest the Australian Touring Car Championship, but with less exotic bodywork, less outrageous wheel/tyres. However, there will be one at Bathurst — given reasonable luck. Gary Leggatt will run such a car, suitably uprated to local specs and supported in the usual way with Alfa Romeo Australia moral and component/development assistance. It is support in stark contrast with Alfa Romeo SpA's "many millions" spent on European Fl (according to Dr Ing. Corrado Innocenti, Alfa Managing Director), even allowing for Marlboro's multi-million dollar support for the team. But the Australian support is admirable for its relativity to such a modest market — 1500 vehicle licences, a projected 2200-2500 sales this year by buying-up every other available licence. Not difficult to imagine the restrictions on promotional cash on such a lean share of the market.

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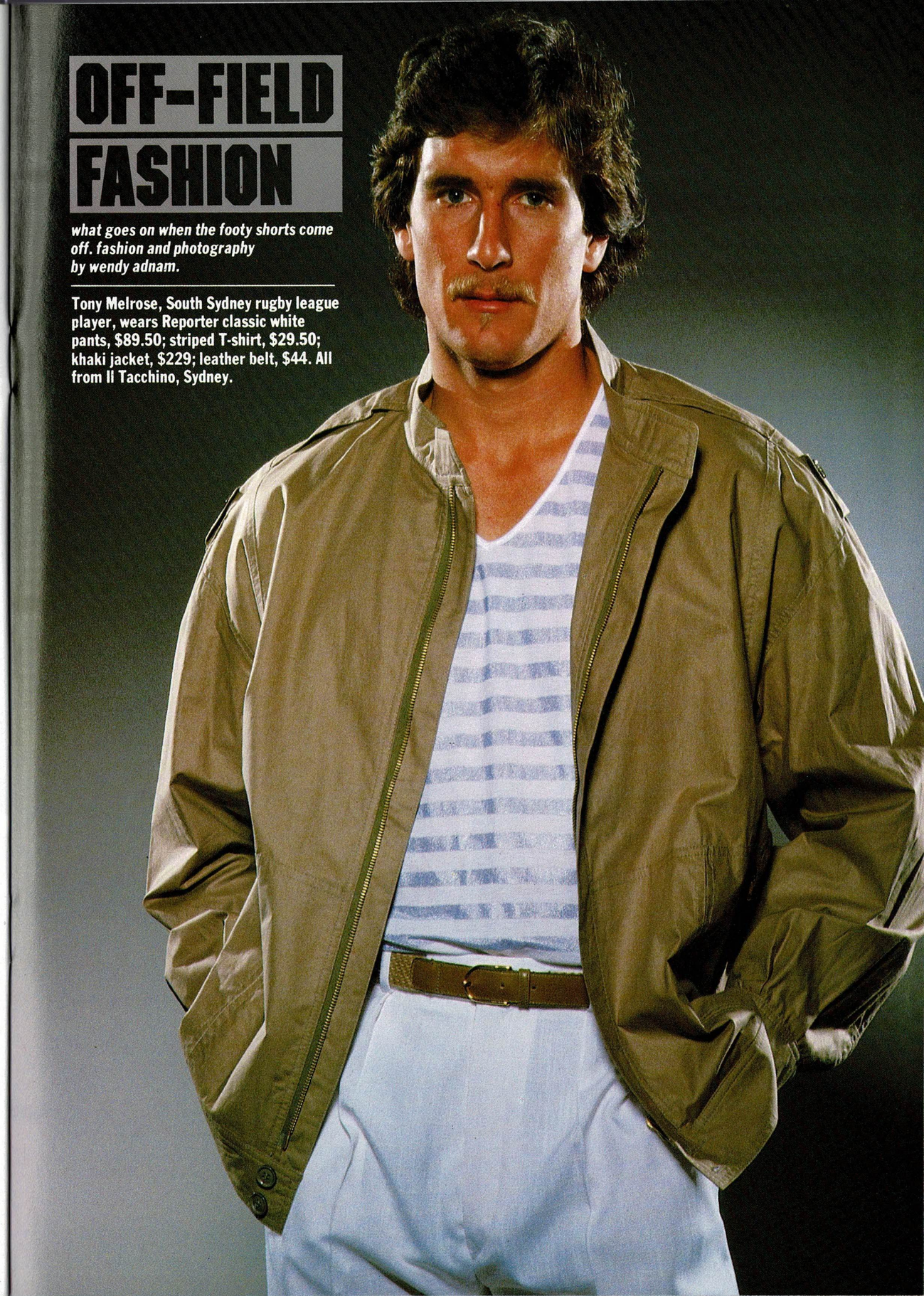
MILANO, SATURDAY 2AM, OUTSIDE A GELATERIA: The thermometer is oscillating between 0-3 degrees, the heavy mist occasionally condensing as big fluffy snowflakes drift down, settling and dissolving. Yet there must be 300 people milling around in the gelato shop, spilling out on to the footpath, licking enthusiast-

(continued on page 130)

OFF-FIELD FASHION

what goes on when the footy shorts come off. fashion and photography by wendy adnam.

Tony Melrose, South Sydney rugby league player, wears Reporter classic white pants, $89.50; striped T-shirt, $29.50; khaki jacket, $229; leather belt, $44. All from Il Tacchino, Sydney.



Peter Stone, St George soccer player, wears curry chino pants, $105; shirt, $95; blouson jacket, $240. Prices approx. All by Robert Burton, from selected boutiques. Giorgio Armani belt from Masons, Sydney and Melbourne.

Laurie Monaghan, Gordon rugby union player, wears ACC's white parachute pants, $75; belt, $17; white double-breasted jacket, $105; with striped T-shirt, $19.50, by Plot. All available from selected stores. Santos watch by Cartier.

Peter wears curry pants, $120; shirt, $95; jacket, $390. Prices approx. All by Robert Burton. Laurie wears blue pants, $120; shirt, $95; jacket, $390. Prices approx. All by Robert Burton. Tony wears a Prince of Wales suit, approx. $449; cotton shirt, $49.50; tie, $32.50. All from Il Tacchino, Sydney. Hair by Tony Guthrie.

HONG KONG

confusion and paranoia rule when another jewel falls from the empire's crown

THIS STORY came about somewhat by accident. Amidst the compressed space of Hong Kong we sensed the compressed time: 1997, the year Hong Kong reverts to China, looms over the last British colony east of Suez. It sows unformulated fears in the darker recesses of the city and people's minds. Hong Kong, Berlin, Warsaw, Aden. Integration, immigration. Recuperation and exile. Eastern, western, freedom, fear. Confucian, confusion in the Chinese new year of the Dog. All remains, for the present, calm on the Eastern Front. So we first imagined the musings of the new British governor, who arrived in Hong Kong this April, with, as his brief, to negotiate the future of the colony.

THE GOVERNOR'S STORY

I'm to be sent to rule the little dragon. Rule — perhaps too strong a word. Oversee along with the Jockey Club and the Hong Kong bank. Am I a walking anachronism? What shall I wear for the occasion? The full archaic regalia of the Queen's representative. A three-cornered hat perhaps? How will I arrive? By the Star Ferry? To be greeted by a British community placed in rows by order of their club — Cricket, Royal Tennis, Sailing, Bowls. We will forget for a moment the decline of the empire. Imperial commerce withdraws its claws and sells up Hong Kong operations and retreats back to the mother country's tottering economy.

We will forget what altogether sounds like an economic zen riddle: the bright young pupil having fabulously learnt his lesson in entrepreneurial capitalism and having publicised it in gaudy neon lights is out to devour the master.

The Colony's bank, Hong Kong and Shanghai, has been temporarily defeated by the old hag crying foul and throwing up the last defences of a monopoly commission — the antithesis of what once made her great. Pity that Britain's archaic, arrogant and hypocritical institutions couldn't see a potential antidote in a little eastern rejuvenation.

On the steps of Government House we will forget all this. The British flag will fly and I will be protected by a police force, so visibly influenced by us in their neat dark blue uniforms. Like in the days of Victoria, the flag once again seems like a surrealistic mistake. Comic, like the image of an opium addict framed and hung with the mention "British subject".

We took a rock in 1898 and we're giving back a pearl today. China is no longer blurred by an opium haze. Digits are shaping Hong Kong's future — 1997 — the lease is running out.

Can the master still be of some use so the halycon days continue? Here I am to preserve a booming economy and I'm the representative of a country that has gone to the dogs.

Hong Kong — the last outpost of Britain east of Suez. Remember the debacle when we last left a colony east of Suez: Aden, a year later the buildings were empty and crumbling under the desert sun. The ships stopped calling and the once bustling duty-free port started to sink into the sands. Of course that was small fry compared with what is at stake here.

We have created a wonderful myth that somehow Britain leaves its dependencies in an orderly fashion. Unlike the continentals — French or Portuguese. Reality is of

fiction by philip brooks and antoine raphael garcia

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JAN WHITING/SCOOPIX SYDNEY

course grimmer. Few civil wars have been so bloody as the one which followed our retreat from India. And Zimbabwe?

I am to be sent to arrange an orderly transfer of power or a continued British presence. I am to be sent to negotiate with men like Deng, who I know well from my time as ambassador to Peking, a reasonable solution.

China needs Hong Kong. The little Dragon — who coined the term? — oh yes, Hermann Kahn, the American futurologist and predictor with the "trickle down theory" of neo-confucian societies, where everybody gets a piece of the pie. Toward the bottom sometimes the drops seem to evaporate faster than they fall.

Accommodation — negotiation — shouldn't be too difficult in the business

1997

field. China needs Hong Kong and Hong Kong is already part of China. Chinese businessmen run the place. It is they who live on the peak, above the British, and on their way up to the top of the hill they devise, in their Rolls-Royces, plans for more profit, more production, more cleanliness, more efficiency, more order. No, for those at the top, the changeover should be smoothe. In any case, if there is upheaval they can always fall back on their overseas investments. It is the foreigners who, perhaps, have the most to lose. China prefers to do business with its own kind rather than the Gweilos.

Yes. Hong Kong is so far winning the race to make the colony as indispensable and unmanageable as possible. I have a joint project in my briefcase now for a satellite town in the border area. China's southern provinces are now making the goods Hong Kong once made — the textiles that gave the colony its initial boom. They are following in our path — God forbid —while Hong Kong moves into the higher stakes and greater profits of producing new technology.

Deng and Co. don't want to take possession of a glittering empty jewel box. China in a fabulous market and Hong Kong can still be the gateway. Last month the Chinese suggested making it a free port. Perhaps they'll even allow a symbolic British presence — a Beefeater and a neon portrait of the Queen next to Mao.

But China doesn't want any of the West's culture accompanying the technological know-how. In our desire for a market, aren't we being blind? I'm not so sure about Hong Kong people. After all, a good proportion of them have fled from the other side of the bamboo curtain. Will our neat little plans for the handover fly out the window? Our hope is to create a mono-culture, Swissify the place, along the lines of Lee Kuan Yew's Singapore.

The "Hong Kong is Watching You" campaign against rubbish, drugs and moral decay is a start. Then perhaps people won't notice 1997. There was a survey among school leavers. On the question of 1997 the vast majority shivered at the thought of integration. They wanted to leave — to go to the Canada, the US, Australia — Britain was low on their list — I sympathise. But it is a good thing, for though British in name, we won't let them in. They may as well be stateless persons.

And perhaps they are right to be paranoid. The campaign in China to emancipate the mind has ground rapidly to a halt. The attacks continue against young people who copy bourgeois hairstyles, workers who demand bourgeois democracy in their factories, and against writers who cast doubts on socialism by criticising Mao and his cultural revolution.

The Chinese are rather like the British. They have the art of pulling the wool over the rest of the world's eyes down to a fine art. In the west, China is different from the Soviet Union. Yet Stalin has a pride of place in Peking that he lost long ago in Moscow. Mao, Stalin, Deng.

I am to be sent to avoid an administrative drama. A repeat performance on a grand scale of the Boat People. Previous shows will appear like village hall matinees compared to the multitude of leaky junks that drift mercilessly out on to the South China Sea.

Frustration. Was this just a preview of more frequent outbreaks as 1997 approaches? I read the Foreign Office brief on the Christmas Eve riot! "A boisterous.

ILLUSTRATION NOELLE KONING

crowd of youngsters in an excitable festival mood." An addendum from barefoot reporters showed there was more to it than that. Quite a feat for a high spirited crowd to go on the rampage for six hours, tear off the iron gates at Chater underground station and overturn cars.

No doubt, youths from the other side of the harbor were resentful of the opulence of Central, but it only took a European girl gyrating in front of a camera-clicking Chinese bank clerk and the sparks flew. Arrogance and a mocking attitude serve one badly when there is little to back it up with.

Europeans are a recognisable target. We still hold the top administrative positions in this outpost of progress. To the rich Chinese passing by, the mob shouted: "No not them — They're our own".

No doubt I will learn still more diplomatic tricks from the Chinese. There won't be an end to it, I'm sure.

I am Sir Edward Youde, a Foreign Office mandarin. You — de: Extraordinary Virtue in Chinese. I am to be the new Governor of Hong Kong.

●

Zhao fled from China, lured to Hong Kong by the vision of its TV, which Zhao was easily able to pick up in his southern Cantonese village. Here, with other comrades, Zhao had watched the detergent ads — whereby you buy and you win 5000 HK dollars. And he had seen the variety show where this lady got up and answered a really dumb question and won $10,000. For Zhao the streets of Hong Kong were paved with gold. He didn't want to wait until 1997.

THE REFUGEE'S STORY

At first I was afraid I might be defenceless, but I am not the only one. Our only hope rested with this place. I still miss the sun; I'm not used to the humidity, but light has come to mean fear. I cannot see where it might change. I'm one of the tracked, the looked for, the wanted. I have been forced into darkness.

But in this strange, small appendix we are not all the same. Here I lie, walled in, in enemy territory, still my one and only refuge from those I thought would treat me as a friend, but who now hound me down as an enemy. I'm sure you do not understand. What could the story of a plastic surgery operation on the archaic face of the law, guaranteed by experience and agreed upon by the law, mean to you?

Paradox has hushed my anger. There is nothing I can do. I smoke a lot of opium; I sleep; I gamble; I play mahjong. I have come to like the pimps, the dealers, the whores, the gamblers. They do not seem to mind the lack of sun. I'm not so sure though for they speak little and don't brag.

Rita will not be called a Chinese name. It was now getting late. People were walking up and down, silhouettes materialising into sudden reality. She giggled a few words and then showed me a big bite. "I'll never get used to these fucking beasts," she said, although she'd been living so long in this stenchy place she should know all those rats by name.

We were standing by the dim light of a loosely hanging bulb. We then moved as the water trickling down from the improvised plastic guttering started spattering all over us, making it uncomfortable.

We talked of why she never went to town, to Kowloon or Hong Kong Island just opposite the mainland. She was glued to the place. It was a common destiny. She had thought of moving up to the New Territories; of squatting there like so many thousand other moneyless bums.

The New Territories; wasn't the name a joke!

A high-rise concrete jungle interspersed with patches of hurriedly-built shacks and huts.

There everything reeked of sweat, work and survival. "The Gloomy Territories," she said. The migrant paradise, the police raids, the regular fires, the fear, with China looming just behind like a perpetual threat into resignation.

Kowloon Walled City still clings to former times, like an ugly reminder of origins, like a bad mistake, something to be forgotten.

"It's gone up," she said turning around. "Six dollars now."

The man agreed and they left. "There's no sun here, but at least it's more fun," she shouted as she was climbing up the stairs into Building E.

I have come to realise that sense here can only be found in paradox. Only what is upside down can stand — in a world where darkness means life and leads nowhere. My shelter is a minute, free prison. My freedom is my lucidity. I shall always be an exile. I am not afraid. There is so little that we can do.

I came originally from China without passport or recommendations. I fled alone, at night. I wanted something different. I was getting pressed for time. They are looking for me to send me back. And to avoid China I went to China. From the New Territories I escaped one night to Kowloon Walled City. The place, an old concession from the British, belongs to China. Once under Chinese jurisdiction, Kowloon Walled City has turned into a No Man's land, a legal anachronism, a reluctantly accepted scar, a wart on the sleek pretty face of the Little Dragon. It's a place where the police tread carefully. Night time is safer than daytime. They never come at night. They are too afraid. It is the shelter for the lawless, the criminals, the gangsters, the stateless — a seat of corruption and vice.

Kowloon Walled City will not last, for 1997 is near. I am now trapped. I live in the world of compressed time and space. Here everybody survives. Kowloon Walled City will not survive.

Come down with us to Nathan Road. Soon is young, thin and handsome. He's careless and always has money on him to spend. His eyes are vague, but still spritely. "We're going for some shrimp and fish and prawns. Join us," he asks me mockingly.

Ho didn't say a word. Ho's face looks older, not so tight. He certainly knows every nook and cranny by the smell; he could walk the maze with his eyes closed.

They drifted past into the outside dark. I'm not so nostalgic any more. Opium, it's true, still makes me go. And in these stifling corridors of mine, my mind still wanders every night: I eat luxurious food; meatballs, black eggs, squid, clams, roast pork, duck, fried noodles, sesame seed cakes — I drink strong tea. I sit in the buzz of neon lights, frying pots, jokes; I drink rice liquor, walk around for festive times. My eyes roam about for nice free boys. I wonder what the movies are like. I gaze at painted boards. I drift along with the auspicious night.

I used to envy them, but I can't afford those feelings any more. This is my place. This is my night. I have learnt much. I was a naive eager boy. I thirsted for experience. They made me break the line. I certainly cannot go back.

Kowloon Walled City is the sweat of the past; archaic, lingering, tenacious — a two-sided perpetually moving world of honest hard-working cogs producing food, noise, carpets, garbage, and at night, a den exuding passion, fun, secrets, drugs, games, gambling, speculation, plans, hopes, fears and desires.

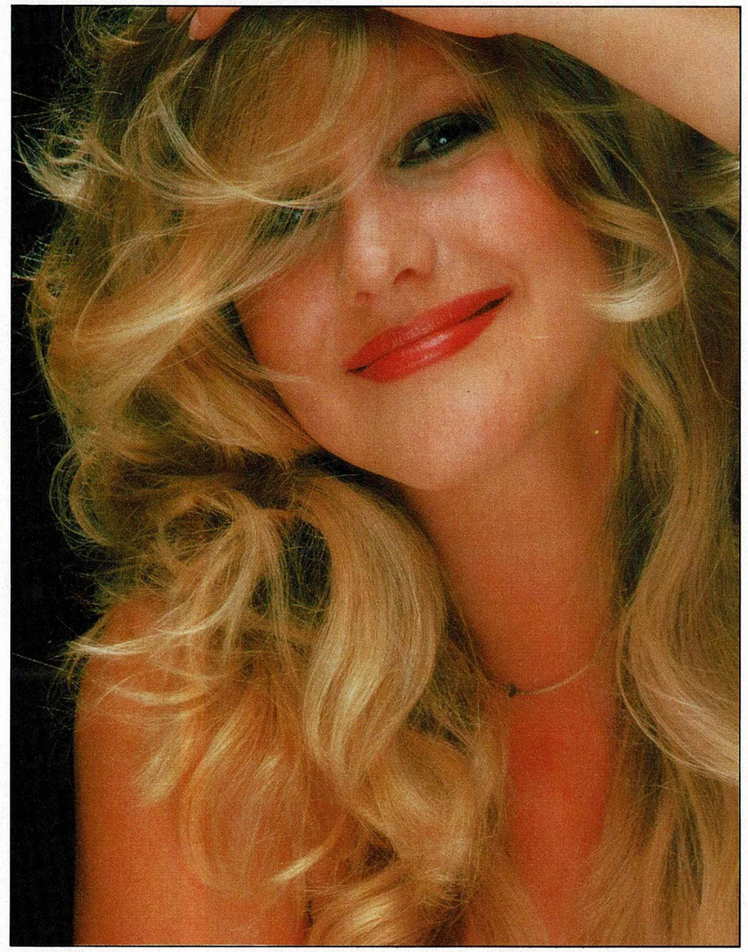
Kowloon Walled City still clings to former times, like an ugly reminder of origins, like a bad mistake, something to be forgotten, erased, eradicated. It clings to the clean world of bureaux, electronics, anti-riot squad, spotless gigantic shopping malls, air-conditioned cafeterias and luxury hotels, slim, elongated business buildings, mental stability, efficiency, work and order.

Kowloon Walled City, the beginning of the narrative string between survival — the filthy work cells, the labyrinth-like world of four-foot sunless alleys, the buzz-buzz of heavy machinery playing its repetitive hum — plastics, metals, textiles. The endless dental shop window displays with teeth dustily smiling at overstrained, stooping, bee-like, ant-like dwellers in the daily stench of the several hundred square-metered sweat shops.

And success; the airy spacious high-rise flats overlooking the harbor and its heavy traffic of tankers, cargo boats, ferries, junks, liners, and fishing boats in an ever going night ballet of stringed lights against a background of multi-colored Sony, Rolleix

(continued on page 126)

BEAUTIFUL DREAMER



It's not surprising that lovely Lynda Wiesmeier gets her share of stares, but the 19-year-old beauty is not impressed with herself. "My 'attractiveness' doesn't affect me," she says. "After all, I've lived with myself my whole life. I think a person should be confident — not to the point of being egotistical, but also not the false modesty trip, either."

PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICHARD FEGLEY

Lynda's sunny disposition and 36-22-36 figure assure her of plenty of modelling work, but her dream is to be a film star. "It would be nice to make a lot of money. I sure don't have a lot now. But I've met a few millionaires who aren't happy, so money is obviously not the key to happiness."

Getting that first big break is tough for a young actress, no matter how talented she is. "The problem," Lynda says, "is that people always want to see what you have already done, not what you actually can do. But I don't let that get to me. I think about things a lot, but I never worry."

PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICHARD FEGLEY

LONG TIME COMING

yes, virginia, there is a 30-minute orgasm

article by richard rhodes

IF I wasn't a compulsive reader, I'd have missed the announcement. It came in my mail as part of a catalogue of travelling weekend workshops for health-science professionals sponsored by a San Francisco outfit, the Pro-seminar Institute. I'm on the mailing list, I suppose, because I write about science and medicine.

I opened the catalogue and found an interesting headline: Expanding Sexual Potentialities for Optimum Health.

I might have stopped there, but the subhead caught my attention: "New Methods and Procedures for Achieving and Extending Sexual Orgasm." Why not? I read on.

The "Program Rationale" explained that we live in a society where reducing pain is acceptable but deliberately seeking pleasure is not. It said sex therapy so far has emphasised fixing problems rather than increasing potential. Some surprising new information has recently come to light, it said: "that males and females are capable of orgasmic functioning vastly beyond what has been traditionally known or reported by Masters and Johnson." (I thought of Masters and Johnson. I had interviewed them back in the late 1960s. I remembered asking them about their origins, noting that it surprised me that prominent sex researchers — Kinsey was another — would emerge in the Bible Belt. It gives us credibility, Virginia Johnson had said.)

The "Program Description" filled two columns. It offered nothing out of the ordinary until Sunday afternoon, the second day of the workshop. Then this:

Clinical video feature: Demonstration of 30 minutes of continuous female orgasm by a sex researcher physician on his wife.

I showed that brief, stunning paragraph to any number of male friends. Strange reactions. Some blushes, a few grins. Mostly shrugs: what about it? Since I couldn't believe they weren't interested, I had to assume they didn't know how long female orgasm has been officially clocked to go on. Seymour Fisher in his 1973 study of several hundreds of

women, *The Female Orgasm,* gives an average of eight to 10 seconds with "a few extreme cases" extending "more than 20 seconds". Before Fisher, Masters and Johnson reported the same eight to 10 seconds, but also discovered among their population of patients a few remarkable women capable of orgasm so unusual that they isolated it separately with a Latin name, as if it were a new species: *status orgasmus,* an orgasm that continues for as long as a full minute.

Yet in my mail one summer day someone named Alan Brauer, MD, Diplomate of the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology, was purporting to offer videotaped proof that a woman's orgasm could continue as long as 30 minutes. I looked carefully then at Brauer's photograph in the upper-left corner of the catalogue page. A young man, full head of curly dark hair, full moustache, shirt and tie, white coat, directly and pleasantly confronting the camera. But something else: one eyebrow slightly arched, one side of his face shadowed — impeccable credentials, but the man had an antic look in his eye.

I thought then that I'd better sign up for the workshop. When my wife, Mary, came home from work and heard about it, she thought we'd both better sign up.

Scene change: Friday afternoon. A chain hotel in a major American city. Lines of people checking in and out. I would learn by the end of the weekend that there were always lines of people checking in and out. That the computer was always broken down. That there was always a 45-minute wait for room service. What else is new? Our cities don't work. Our machines don't work. Good reason to turn back to the delights of simple flesh, if flesh is simple.

The night before the workshop I saw Alan Brauer in the lift. He was slim. He looked like his photograph. There really was an antic look in his eye, an echo of the Mad Hatter in Tenniel's classic illustrations to *Alice In Wonderland.* With him was an attractive woman, a tall, willowy champagne blonde. I didn't ask. He was hurrying up to inspect the slide projectors and video monitors he'd ordered. I thought I'd wait to be introduced.

Scene change: Saturday, 0845. Many floors above the street, a long and narrow walnut-panelled hotel meeting room. A platform at the front of the room, to one side, with a table and chairs for our hosts; a projection screen at front centre; rows of three-chair work tables, already set with water jugs and glasses, proceeding back at each side of a central aisle to the distant rear, where coffee brewed. Mary and I registered, picked up name tags, chose a table in the middle distance. Maybe we were a little tentative, but we were not shy. I didn't want to descend to rebirth in a tepid water bath, nor even name my most secret fantasy.

Our fellow seminarians arrived. A slim, elderly gentleman with a white goatee. Couples in every size and shape, harmonious and dissonant, and several colors. Two young single guys. A priest. (A priest!) Grey hair, glasses, a Humphrey Bogart hat, and a bulky black briefcase covered with stickers. More men than women, and only two women without partners. Maybe 40 people in all, suits to jeans, young to old, skinny to fat: a mixed bag.

The doctor introduced himself. The willowy lady was his wife, Donna. Brauer — Alan — had left New York after medical school for the golden West. Donna was born there and looked it. Languid Donna. Slow blink rate, long lashes, half-closed eyes. Alan explained that his wife worked with him at their private clinic in Palo Alto. He said he liked her to travel with him to balance the teaching and because she was lovely to look at. That woke the sleepers. Titters rippled from the back of the room.

People are embarrassed to talk about sex, Alan began. Body-contact sports, yes. We talk about them all the time. But to talk about physical contact that is pleasurable, said Alan, is taboo.

People are embarrassed to talk about sex, Body-contact sports, yes. But to talk about physical contact that is pleasurable is taboo.

I thought of food. The body needs nutrients. We tear up parts of plants, cut up parts of animals we have killed, mix them with flavoring agents, treat them with heat, crush them with our teeth, alter them with oral secretions, swallow them. A bodily function. Sex isn't different in kind if you reduce it to its mechanics, except that the body can get along without it, more or less. But food we elaborate into a glory, a personal pleasure about which we educate ourselves and a feast we share. We meet, with friends and even with strangers, to try something new. We exchange recipes; look at photographs and salivate; recall nostalgically, at a party, a dish we've eaten or a wine we've drunk. Sex, even among the enlightened, we hardly discuss: sometimes a man to a man, sometimes a woman to a woman, too often not even a partner to a partner. If we devise any great sexual recipes, we devise them on our own.

Among the first tapes the Brauers would show were casual documentary catalogues of genitalia, because unless people have looked at sexually-explicit magazines or films, as most of our fellow seminarians obviously had not, few of them even know how various are the human race's genitals in stimulation and in repose.

Is my point obvious? On Saturday morning of that Brauer weekend I assumed it would be. I thought genital anatomy was obvious, but it wasn't even comfortable to some of the men and women in that classroom, though most of them were counsellors: ministers, gynaecologists, social workers, psychiatrists and psychoanalysts, operators of crisis hotlines. The course proposed to teach enhancement, but when Alan asked how many of us were there to study enhancement as opposed to dysfunction, only Mary and I and the two young guys raised our hands in the forward end of the room (I didn't look behind me), and my claim at least was suspect, since I was also there as a reporter.

The Brauers knew the odds before they came; they'd designed their seminar to begin with the basics, if only to desensitise the sensitive before the videotaped demonstration of extended orgasm that we would see near the end of the weekend, on Sunday afternoon.

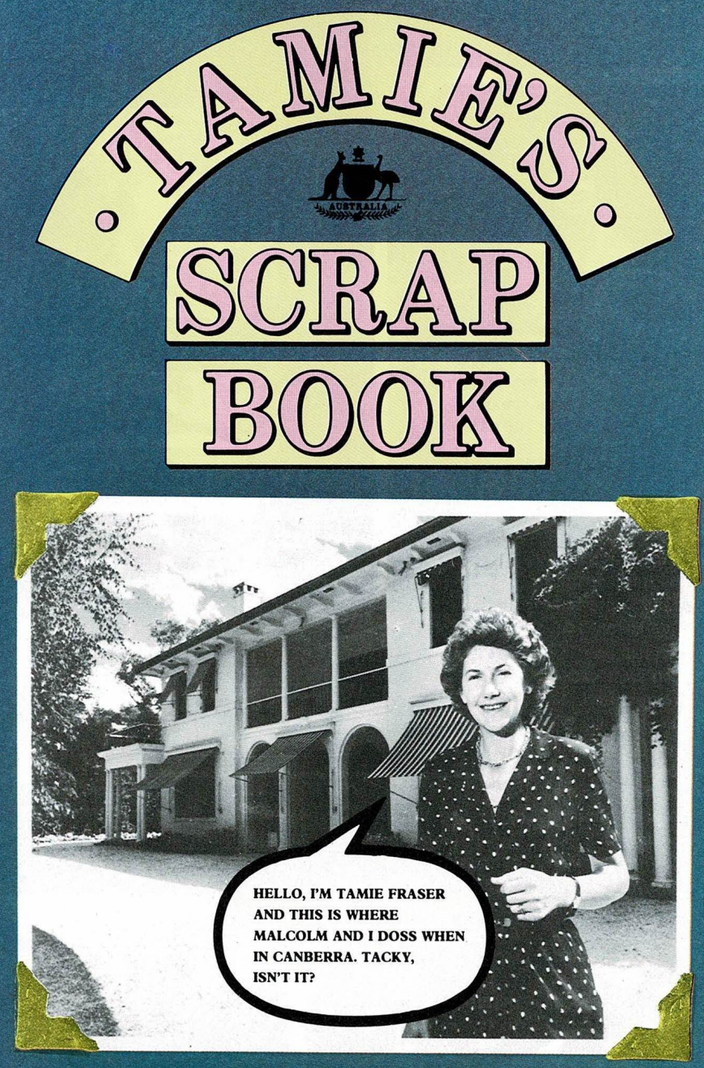
"When I first learned about these techniques for extending male and female pleasure," Alan mentioned later, when the seminar was over, "I told many of my patients about them, even the ones who came in for help quitting smoking. I was excited. I wanted them to know. That went on for a while and then I began wondering why I was losing so many patients. They'd come for one appointment and not come back. It took me a few weeks. I didn't realise I was scaring them off." Donna's laughter, quiet and warm. Alan: "You have to approach the subject very, very slowly. Work up to it. That's why we structure the workshop the way we do."

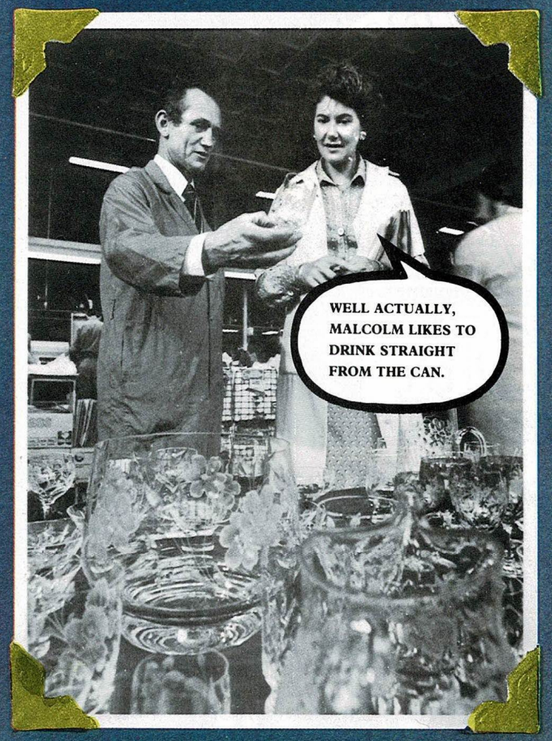
Coffee break. Seminarians surreptitiously checking each other out. The unspoken childish accusation: serious person or sex fiend? We who raised our hands to Alan's inquiry into motive had already declared ourselves.

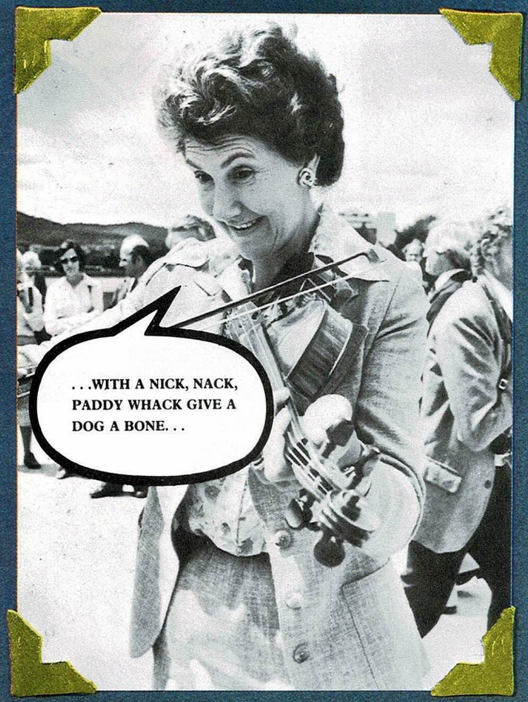
We watched a tape of Wardell Pomeroy, Kinsey's assistant and then successor, taking a sex history the Kinsey way. The woman he was interviewing worked in sex counselling, and he led her only slowly from easy questions to intimate ones, yet she squirmed with discomfort and couldn't light her cigarette. Still, she surprised the old master, later in the interview, by announcing that her parents were nudists. He hadn't realised. "Oh!" Pomeroy exclaimed, involuntarily lifting an eyebrow.

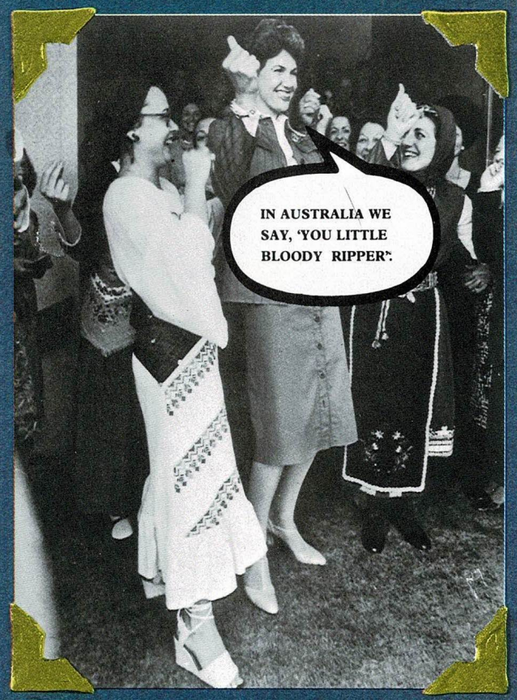
Everyone's sex life is a surprise. Once Kinsey and Pomeroy drove a great distance to collect the history of a man who had kept careful records. He was a college graduate with a responsible government job. His grandmother had taken his heterosexual virginity, his father his homosexual virginity, and he had had sex with 17 of his 33 immediate family members. His sexual relations extended to some 200 pre-adolescent females, 600 pre-adolescent males, and many species of animals. He told the two researchers that he could

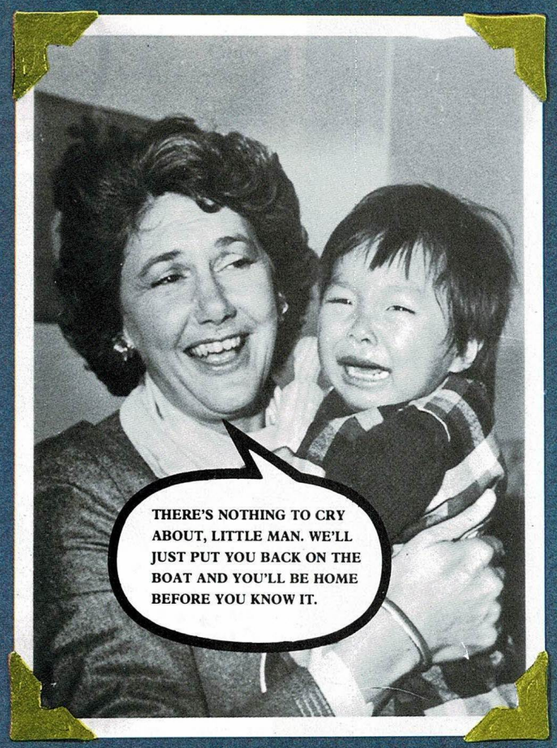
(continued on page 110)

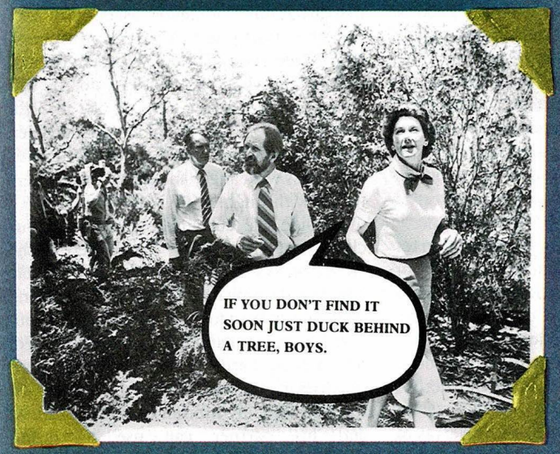



WELL ACTUALLY, MALCOLM LIKES TO DRINK STRAIGHT FROM THE CAN.

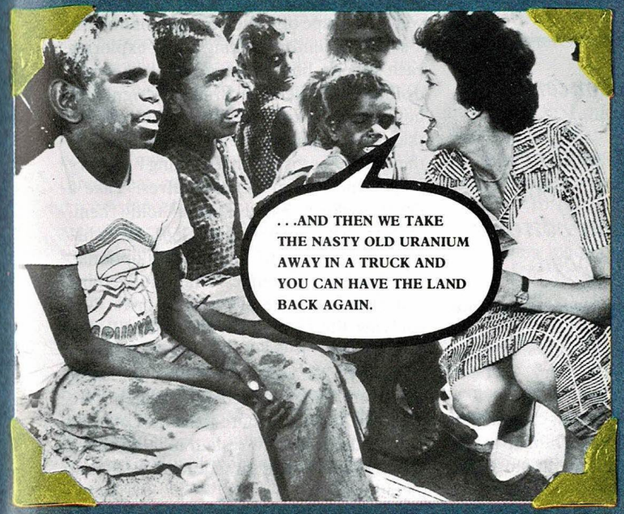

. . .WITH A NICK, NACK, PADDY WHACK GIVE A DOG A BONE. . .


IN AUSTRALIA WE SAY, 'YOU LITTLE BLOODY RIPPER'.

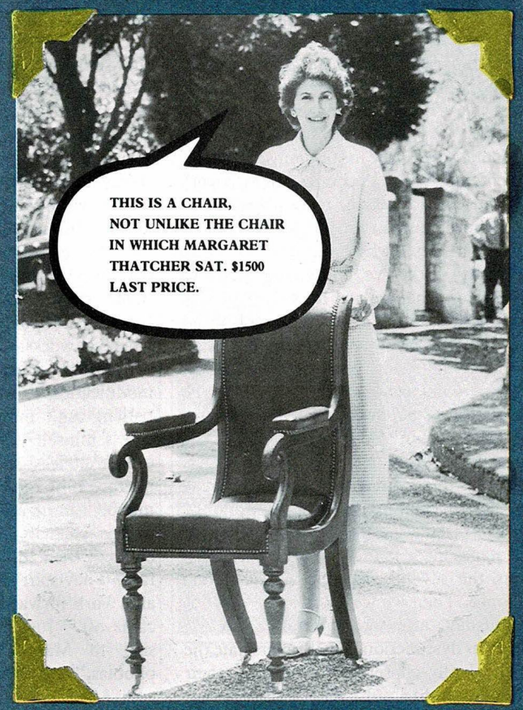

THERE'S NOTHING TO CRY ABOUT, LITTLE MAN. WE'LL JUST PUT YOU BACK ON THE BOAT AND YOU'LL BE HOME BEFORE YOU KNOW IT.


IF YOU DON'T FIND IT SOON JUST DUCK BEHIND A TREE, BOYS.

I'VE HAD IT UP TO HERE WITH THIS WRETCHED DOG POOP.


. . .AND THEN WE TAKE THE NASTY OLD URANIUM AWAY IN A TRUCK AND YOU CAN HAVE THE LAND BACK AGAIN.

WELL, LIFE WASN'T MEANT TO BE EASY, KID, AND UP YOURS TOO.


THIS IS A CHAIR, NOT UNLIKE THE CHAIR IN WHICH MARGARET THATCHER SAT. $1500 LAST PRICE.

masturbate from flaccidity to ejaculation in 10 seconds. They didn't believe him. Calmly, he demonstrated. He was 63 years old. Who knows what our neighbors do?

Who knows what our neighbors do: the Brauers asked us to pair off with strangers to exchange a brief history: what you learned about sex from your parents and what you wish you had learned; your first sexual experience with another person; your best sexual experience; your most embarrassing sexual experience. One of the seminarians, a woman, said her first experience with another person was with her husband on her wedding night and her best experience was with her husband when she had become a mother and was nursing. Another seminarian, a man, said with embarrassment that he was a father and a husband, happily married, but had strong homosexual desires, and thought they might not have arisen to burden him if his parents had told him anything at all about sex. What Mary said and most of what I said, I'll spare you here. As a 14-year-old, I learned a lot, including humility, from a ram at ramming time: when we turned the ewes into his lot at the end of the day, the ram would mate quickly and eagerly four or five times before he picked up his evening newspaper. We painted his belly with iron oxide; in a few weeks there were red-rumped ewes everywhere in the pastures of the farm.

"If you need a reason for sexual self-improvement," Alan was saying, "health is a reason. Most of the body's systems change profoundly during sexual arousal. They're stimulated. I find that many emotional and physical complaints seem to be helped by a prescription of an orgasm a day." Some of the seminarians squirmed. Alan nodded. "An orgasm a day. It meets with a lot of resistance. Huge resistance. 'That's impossible.' 'My God, are you kidding?' "

Donna: "We have to start our sex therapy patients slowly and encourage them to work up to it. Once a week or twice a week, then three times, four, and so on. And work with their partners, who may be enraged, especially if they've bottled up years of anger about their sexual lives."

They presented a lesson in advanced anatomy, for review and to prepare us. I do the same here for you. Female orgasm involves contractions not only of the muscles that surround the vaginal entrance and the anus but also of the muscles of the uterus. Male orgasm proceeds in two stages: a stage of intense sensation when the male feels that ejaculation is approaching and the stage of ejaculation itself. Then a series of videotapes made in Germany demonstrated to us the several signs of female sexual response. Then we went to lunch.

Saturday afternoon. Before function there was dysfunction. The Brauers hate the word, a badly-chosen word coined by their colleagues in St Louis. What's good in sex? What's bad? For a Catholic priest, the best sexual function is no sexual function, not even wet dreams. For the man who ejaculates before he's ready to, good is plateau stage longer sustained. For a woman who is preorgasmic — the Brauers' word, nice word, the word used to be "frigid" — good is orgasm. Subjectivity, as with food; someone likes steak and baked potato, someone else likes pureed artichokes, another likes eel. The Brauers' definition of sexual dysfunction: "The gap between a person's expectations and his experience." That's subjective enough, a prescription for comedy. Where sex is concerned, sooner or later we're all clowns, our feet tangled in our pants, a boil discovered on our bottoms, something hidden in a closet, baby talk, a collapsing bed. That's one of its purposes, to relieve us of our sometimes murderous dignity.

The Brauers close the gap with an array of technologies, with masturbation training, biofeedback training, hypnosis, relaxation techniques and more. Hearing their list, I realised I'd slept through an entire generation of sex therapy development. When I visited Masters and Johnson the work had just begun; they improvised as they went along. Now therapists like the Brauers have access to every sort of technology right off the shelf.

Where sex is concerned, sooner or later we're all clowns, our feet tangled in our pants, a boil discovered on our bottoms, a collapsing bed.

Donna later made the process clear with a casual remark: "So we hooked him up to the biofeedback," she said, telling the story of a patient whose only satisfaction came when he hung from a chinning bar and slapped his erection against a doorframe. The biofeedback was to help him relax. The Brauers break down problems into sections of behavior and plug in every kind of machine, whatever works. Not only hardware, but the conceptual machinery of behavioral modification as well. If a deeply inhibited patient can't masturbate, can he at least caress himself? If he can't caress himself, can he at least look at himself nude in a mirror? If he can't look at himself nude in a mirror, can he at least look at himself in a mirror partially clothed? If not partially clothed, then fully clothed, his hands and face? They start with hands and face, then, and work forward. Eventually the clothes came off. "Just like phobia treatment," I said to Mary. "They're dealing with phobias," she responded. Dumb of me. Of course they are.

Do not imagine that the workshop proceeded smoothly. Our seminarians stirred. "Why all this emphasis on masturbation?" someone asked hostilely, though not the priest. A tall man with a red, angry face spewed intellectual jargon and announced twice, the first day, that he was watching to see if he got his money's worth. It developed that he was alone and had been alone for months or years. He barricaded his loneliness with anger and dared the Brauers to break through.

Outside the curtained windows of our classroom, an airshow roared across the afternoon sky. The Brauers ignored the jets and led us onward. I learned something new, new at least to me, new perhaps to you: that a man can maintain ejaculatory control with a good, hard tug on his scrotum, high up, drawing the testicles down. He can learn the technique by himself or with a partner, and his partner can use it during intercourse, on signal, to extend his response.

Alan and Donna proposed the technique as a superior alternative to the squeeze method of ejaculatory control that Masters and Johnson pioneered.

To end the first day of the weekend, we watched a tape of a nude couple conducting a sexual inventory, taking turns exploring each other's body, asking about likes and dislikes, and then the Brauers assigned us homework in kind. Assigned the couples, that is; the singles they asked to imagine they would be visited that evening by a Very Important Person — themselves. Take a long, soaking bath, Donna told them, explore their own bodies, look for what gives them pleasure. Orgasm was optional, as it was for the couples. Mary nudged me and pointed to the priest. The priest was studying the night's TV programs.

Mary and I spent the evening taking inventory. We've been together for eight years, and we know each other well, but we found we both had more to learn. Later we went to dinner, a new restaurant high above the city, and learned something more of that pleasure, too.

Complaints began Sunday morning. The intellectual denounced the Brauers' approach as over-simplistic. He didn't have to attend a seminar to be told to pleasure himself, he said; he'd been doing that for years; if he'd had a partner last night he might feel different. Alan said simply, wait and see. A business consultant in attendance, a specialist in seminars, proposed that the workshop was organised to build up to "an ah-ha! experience!" — the videotape scheduled for that afternoon — and Alan said simply, wait and see.

We weren't finished with review. Alan recited a list of masturbation myths. He mentioned Onan, whose sin, he said, was spilling his seed on the ground. The priest spoke up to clarify. Onan's fault was moral, the priest said; it was not that he spilled his seed on the ground but that he refused to service his brother's wife. Warming to the explanation, the priest went on to say that Jesus Christ never discussed these issues, that what was appropriate in a time of scant population is no longer true now, when the problem is over-population in the world.

Surprising sentiments from a Roman priest on Sunday morning. They reminded me of the politics of sex just as Alan Brauer was approaching the same territory, talking about modifying the Puritan ethic, though he hardly spent time there, intending only a briefing before passing on to technique.

But the great unspoken secret of sex, in our society and in every other, is how rigorously it has been turned to political ends — more rigorously than any other bodily system. What we eat, how we cook our food, is political, defining who we are and with whom our sensibilities mesh — you are still a suspect soul in some areas of our society if you eat raw beef or fish, or have a taste for puppy — but not nearly so profoundly as sex. It isn't only a matter of taboos; it's a matter of using the body itself to define the boundaries of a culture. We don't formally tattoo ourselves to indicate our tribe, nor practise elaborate rituals of circumcision, but oral sex is French, not American, and anal sex is Greek, not American, and sex with animals is bestial, and homosexuality is still beyond the pale. Each exclusion progressively defines us; each exclusion, with many more, has been written into punitive law that only now begins to be relaxed and that remains on the books almost everywhere as an implicit threat that can easily be made explicit if circumstances warrant. No wonder there are undercurrents of hostility and more than a whiff of fear in this pleasant seminar room; no wonder some of Alan's patients, when he first announced his discovery, leapt for the windows, never to return.

"It's astonishing to me how many people masturbate without using lubricants," I heard Alan say, and was astonished with him, having even tried Vicks Vaporub once, to my acutely mentholated discomfort. We watched a film of men masturbating. They reminisced; I realised that we remember our first climaxes vividly. Think of the potential of the human body for pleasure; think of how thoroughly that potential is unattended, abandoned, controlled. This century's swing of the pendulum would move us away at least from over-control, but even the Brauers, still shifting from a focus on pain to a focus on pleasure, speak of limits, as if sexuality has no limits inherent in its metrics of nerve and pulse and blood. That's the fear of our inhibited culture: that sex might devour, that it might turn us away from unthinking love of God and blind love of country. Maybe, if all goes well, it will.

"We prefer to look at sex as something that can get better and better," began Alan on the Ah ha! afternoon. "It's very little looked at this way. It was bad enough, a lot of people thought, to look at *dysfunction,* much less how to make sex better. But it can be made better, much better." He cited the official duration of orgasm, concluding. . . "and one full minute for what Masters and Johnson called *status orgasmus.*" Donna smiled. "Would you believe four hours?" she asked. Eyes widened in a wave back through the classroom, and Alan nodded enthusiastic confirmation.

He then wheeled out a portable blackboard and drew a graph of a single standard orgasm for us.

"The most important basis for change," Alan explained, standing beside his graph, "is knowing that change is possible. Masters and Johnson did a disservice by defining orgasm as limited. The vaginal contractions of female orgasms seem to fit those findings, but we have seen a longer response based on uterine contractions. These turn up in women in trusting states with a partner. We find that women can continue to higher and higher states of arousal, with continuous contractions that are obvious and externally visible and that can be felt through the lower abdominal wall. These are involuntary reflexes, and the woman always reports she's not doing anything, only simply *allowing* something to happen. So," said Alan, erasing the board and rechalking it, "instead of multiple orgasm. . . women who have learned to achieve an extended orgasmic state build upward from orgasm itself."

"When we say this," Donna commented then, "the first question is almost always, 'Won't I get exhausted?' The answer is no. Once you've learned how to achieve this state, it requires no effort. It's easy."

Alan: "In fact, after about two minutes into this state, physiological responses — respiration, blood pressure and so on — go down. Not to baseline, but down. The woman still reports orgasmic sensation, but she doesn't have to work to sustain it."

Graphs are interesting, but they don't convince. Next we came to the videotaped demonstration. Lights out, curtains drawn against the encroaching machines, we leaned forward to watch.

A gynaecological examining table draped with a white sheet. A row of observers — students — in folding chairs to one side. Background voices. A slim man in a tank top and jeans leads a young woman into view. She's tanned, naked, pretty. The man is a doctor. His name is Marc. The woman, Susan, is his wife. Marc helps Susan up on to the table. She sits, looking toward the camera, while he points out the normal pink color of her eyelids, a reference he asks us to note for the changes we will see.

Susan lies down on her back. Marc begins playing lightly with one of her nipples and she begins. . . pulsing. Slight involuntary movements of her arms, her hands, her belly, her legs. It's obvious that she's in orgasm. Her husband grazes the hair on her *mons* with his fingertips. "Hair is an extension of the epidermis," he says, "and the epidermis is a sense organ." Susan's pulsing increases and we see.

Marc sits down beside his wife on a stool, facing the camera. Susan sets her feet into the stirrups of the examining table and her thighs open before us. Her husband

EXHAUSTS
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EXHAUSTS

lubricates the thumb and index finger of his right hand with Vaseline. He opens Susan's labia, takes time to identify the structures of major and minor labia, vaginal introitus, urinary meatus, clitoris and clitoral hood and begins gently, slowly, stroking her clitoris. She pulses more intensely and begins to moan.

An off-camera voice asks if anyone doubts that Susan is in orgasm. One of the observers on the tape, a young woman, says: "I can see she's turned on, but I don't know." Marc invites the young woman up to see. "Touch her thigh," he says. "Go ahead. It's okay." The young woman does, feels the muscular contractions there, sees the bright flush of color in the vagina that signals the orgasmic state. She returns to her chair convinced, shaking her head.

Marc takes Susan up to highs where she moans and involuntarily moves to flex her entire body. He restrains her gently with the arm and elbow of his caressing hand. With the index finger of his other hand he sweeps the inner wall of his wife's vagina, stopping at the loci of major nerve plexuses as he goes. She reacts with ecstasy to the sweeping finger.

I discovered that there were tears in my eyes. So did Mary. For 30 minutes we watched a human being experiencing intense pleasure, pleasure shared with someone she trusted and loved.

The technique for extending female orgasm is deceptively simple. The man lightly and directly stimulates the woman's clitoris with his well-lubricated finger and thumb, maintaining a slow, steady platform of stimulation at a rate of about one stroke per second. He doesn't speed up as the woman's response intensifies (unless she asks), but if she seems to be coming down from arousal he may reduce pressure even to the slightest touch in a kind of "teasing". The woman guides him — by telling him what she needs, by directing his hand with her own, by moving her genitals toward his stimulating hand or away. He attends carefully to her signs of arousal and feels for the rhythm that will sustain and increase the arousal; it's a knack and it comes, in time, with attention, by itself.

During the learning process the man has to feel each and every one of the woman's resistances, but the primary responsibility for overcoming her resistances ("He's getting tired"; "He's looking at me"; "I don't deserve this"; "We're wasting time") is the woman's. She must talk herself through. She may choose to relax through a breathing process or use fantasy. She may choose to talk to her partner. She will find arousal where it is appropriate for her; she will find her way eventually (in weeks or months of regular practice) into extended orgasm if, knowing it is possible, both partners pay attention and allow themselves a full measure of private time — but less time, usually, than men and women routinely commit to sports or social activities.

Finally Susan sat up. Marc pointed out her eyelids. They were colored so deeply they looked bruised. "They're engorged," Marc said. "That's what eye shadow is all about." His wife looked deeply peaceful. She was still lightly in orgasm. He kissed her and they walked away together.

Alan and Donna Brauer turned on the lights in our classroom to silence. We were stunned. I saw grins, but I saw anger as well. Not much comment nor many questions. One comment from a doctor that helped explain the anger on the faces of some of the men. "If you give the woman this," the doctor called out in a Spanish accent, "she will be wanting it all the time, and you know no man can handle that." We had watched a man handling it, but this intelligent, articulate doctor didn't yet believe his eyes.

To balance what we had seen, the Brauers quickly went on to discuss extending male orgasm. They had no film to show. They are currently producing one. The techniques they teach have been reported before, but their training methods are their own.

For 30 minutes we watched a human being experiencing intense pleasure, pleasure shared with someone she trusted and loved.

"It's easier for women to learn to extend their orgasms than it is for men," Alan explained. "Men of every age can learn to have several orgasms in a row, but that's a separate skill from extending the orgasmic state itself. If you conceive of every man, regardless of his sexual endurance, as being essentially an early ejaculator, you can see how we proceed in our training. He participates passively, much as the woman does; you have two attentions on one nervous system, just as we saw with Susan in the film.

"A man can't be quite as passive as a woman, because he has to monitor where he is in order to avoid going over the edge and ejaculating. What happens is this: the woman, using a combination of manual and oral stimulation, takes the man up to a point near ejaculation, to the emission stage where he's secreting clear fluid, and then stops or uses scrotal traction to allow his level of arousal to drop slightly. Then she takes him up again. She does this three to nine times in a given session over a period of one to three months. Within that time period, a man can learn better control, how to stay in the highly pleasurable stage next to ejaculation. Once he learns that control, he'll find his arousal level going up so that he can accept even more stimulation before ejaculation. The closer he can get to the point of ejaculation without actual release, the better it feels."

Donna: "He'll be in an almost continuous state of emission, producing clear fluid. He may well produce a cup or more of fluid during one extended session. While they're learning how to achieve these extended states, I ought to add, they take turns pleasuring each other. Our rule is, the woman first. That's because she usually has more resistances to overcome. She has to do a lot of self-talk along the way, talking herself through."

Ultimately, the Brauers said, both partners reach a point where they can experience these states of high arousal during intercourse, each shifting subtly from active to passive as they go. "It becomes a kind of dance," Donna summarised. At least weekly, a couple returns to the training stage of oral and manual stimulation to maintain levels of skill.

I asked the Brauers afterwards how they learned that extended female orgasm was possible. They learned it from the couple who demonstrated it on the videotape. That couple, in turn, learned it by trial and error.

Alan and Donna are developing the techniques necessary to teach extended male and female orgasm to others. So far they've trained a small group of volunteers willing to be studied for purposes of scientific reporting. The Brauers expect to report at length when their trained population is larger, but they have already demonstrated that the techniques can be learned, even by patients of theirs who had presented themselves with problems of erectile inadequacy and preorgasmia. Some of their most successful patients are men of middle age and older.

"It's like the four-minute mile," Alan Brauer concludes. "The most important breakthrough is simply knowing that it's possible. And it is."

I said at the outset that what the Brauers have discovered and the techniques they are learning to teach will change the way most of us make love and the way all of us think about sex.

There will be a full measure of resistance to these lessons in pleasure; pleasure is still suspect, as the Brauers discover even in professional seminars. Their work is the front line of sex research today, beyond the repair of "dysfunction". Significantly, the Brauers teach sexual enhancement to couples during two-week "holidays" at their clinic, much as Masters and Johnson counselled couples in two-week sessions of intensive therapy.

Up to a point, the training is even similar; the difference, an important difference, is emphasis on pleasure rather than on relieving pain. For the significant minority who are happy with their sexual relationships, that difference defines a future potential of extraordinary promise.

VINTAGE 1979
Angove's
Tregrehan
RESERVE
CLARET
(DRY RED TABLE WINE)
—CELLAR BOTTLED—
PRODUCED & BOTTLED BY
ANGOVE'S PTY. LTD
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13.5% VOL PRODUCE OF AUSTRALIA
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AUSTRALIA
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Wines
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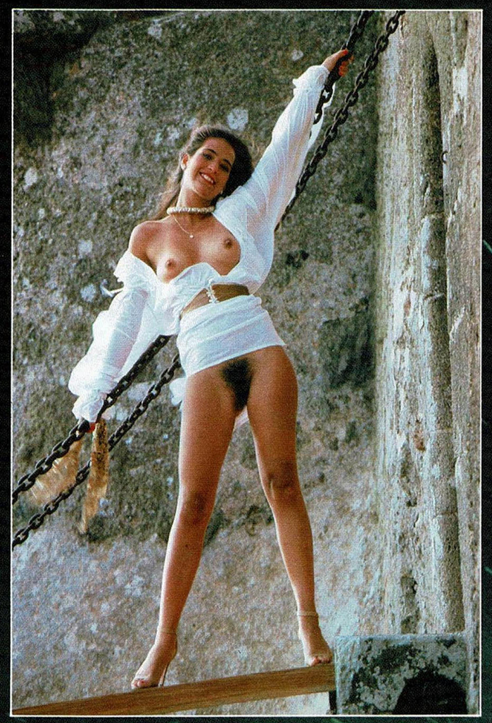
Angove's Tregrehan (pronounced Treg-rain) has been well known amongst wine connoisseurs for many years.
It is a blend of Cabernet and Shiraz grown in the Riverland district of South Australia.
The wine is fresh and clean, showing good fruit character and careful wood maturation. "Treg" is a superb example
of today's modern style in reds — easy to drink, easy to enjoy and excellent value. It is ideally suited to today's wine consumer.

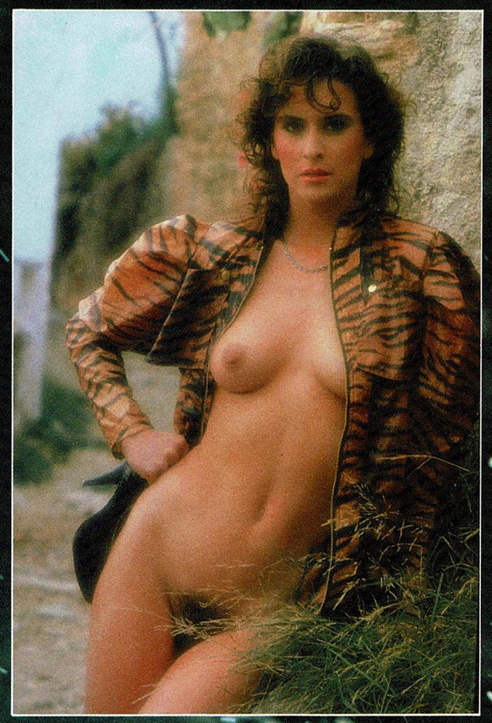
GIRLS OF SPAIN

WORLD OF PLAYBOY

It's easy to find beautiful girls in Spain. Finding exceptionally beautiful girls takes longer. But we took the time, and here, for your enjoyment, we present: Jacqueline Lana Marcan (above left). She was born in Manila, lives in Barcelona and wants to become a magician. Elana Romera (above right) was born in San Sebastian, lives in Ibiza and works as a public relations officer. Carmen Gil Bayona (right) is a 22-year-old model from Barcelona.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY POMPEO POSAR





WORLD OF PLAYBOY

Marta Elana Jiminez Perez (above left) has worked for TV in the Canaries and is now a convention hostess. She was photographed at the Castillo de Guanapay, an old castle in Lanzarote. Petra Machalinski (above right) went to Spain to improve her Spanish and stayed for good. Katy Bellari (right) comes from Morocco, lives in Madrid and is a body-builder by profession. She was "Sta. Culturismo" for the World Cup.

WORLD OF PLAYBOY

Heike Wesenberg (above left) left Germany with her boyfriend to live in Ibiza. She also cut a record in Germany for CBS. Alicia Garcia Moller (above right) is a student of economics who likes jealous men. She was photographed at La Pedrera in Barcelona, one of the most famous architectural wonders of Gaudi. Yolanda Egger (right) is a Swiss-born actress who now lives in Marbella (next door to actor Sean Connery).

COCKTAIL PARTY

(continued from page 47)

We had our last night, a night of miracles, and while I slept she vanished, and the walls of the world fell in on me.

her beyond measure, though she terrified me. What did I fear? What does anyone fear most? That in a vulnerable moment someone will say, "I understand what a fraud you are, I have seen all your facades fall away, I know the truth about you." I would not say such a thing to Melanoleum, nor Nullamar to me, nor any of us to any of us, but yet I felt Domitilla wouldn't hesitate to flay me down to the core beneath the Shapings, if that suited her whim, and I lived in dread of that, and I always will.

On the 30th day she said goodbye.

"Please," I said. "Another week."

"Those were the terms."

"Even so."

"If we refuse to honor contracts, all society collapses."

"Have I bored you?" Foolish question, inviting destruction.

"Not nearly as much as I thought you would," she replied, and I loved her for it, having expected worse. "But I have other things to do. My new Shaping, Sandalphon."

"You won't. What you are now is too beautiful to discard."

"What I will be next will surpass it."

"I beg you — stay as you are a little longer."

"I undergo engineering tomorrow at dawn," she said, "at the gene-surgery in Kathmandu."

Arguing with her was hopeless. We had our last night, a night of miracles, and while I slept she vanished, and the walls of the world fell in on me. I hurried out to my friends, and was house guest in turn with Nullamar and Mandragora and Melaneum and Candelabra, and not one of them said the name of Domitilla to me, and at the end of the year I went to Spinifex and Mortissa to admire the new child in the graceful shell of my happy designing, and then, despondent, I popped to Kathmandu.

All year long, a new Domitilla had been emerging from the altered genetic material of the previous one, and now her Shaping was nearly complete. They wouldn't let me see her, but they sent messages in, and she agreed to my request to have dinner with her on the day of her coming-forth. That was still a month away. I could have gone anywhere in the world, but I stayed in Kathmandu, thinking that my month of Domitilla had gone by in a flick and this month of waiting was taking an eternity, and then it was the day.

The inner door opened and nurses came out, standard humans, and an orderly or two, and then the surgeon, and then Domitilla. I recognised her at once, the same wiry armature as ever. The new body she wore was the one she had designed for the child of Spinfex and Mortissa. A standard human frame, mortifyingly human, the body of a servant, of a hewer of wood and drawer of water, except that it glowed with the inner fire that burned in Domitilla and that no member of the lower orders could conceivably have. And she was different from the standards in another way, for she was naked, and she had used the hermaphrodite design, breasts above, male organs below. I felt as if I had been kicked; I wanted to clutch my gut and double over. Her eyes gleamed.

"Do you like it?" she asked, mocking me.

I was unable to look. I turned and tried to run, but she called after me, "Wait, Sandalphon!"

Trembling, I halted. "What do you want?"

"Tell me if you like it."

"The terms of the contest bound you not to use any of the designs," I said bitterly. "You claimed always to abide by terms."

"Always. Except when I choose not to." She spread her arms. "What do you think? Tell me you like it and I'm yours for tonight!"

"Never, Domitilla."

She touched her groin. "Because of *this?*"

"Because of you," I said. I shivered. "How could you do it? A standard, Domitilla. A *standard!*"

"You poor old fool," she said.

Again I turned, and this time she let me go. I travelled to Madagascar and Turkey and Greenland and Bulgaria, and her images blazed in my mind, the wolverine-girl I had loved and the grotesque thing she had become. Gradually the pain grew less. I went in for a new Shaping, despite Hapshash and his coterie, and came out simpler, more sleek, less conglomeroid. I felt better, then. I was recovering from her.

A year went by. At a party in Oaxaca I told the story, finally, to Melanoleum, stunning in her new streamlined form.

"If I had it all to do over, I would," I said. "One has to remain in an existentially pliant posture, of course. One must keep alert to all possibilities. And so I have no regrets. But yet — but yet — she hurt me so badly, love. . ."

"Look over there," said Melanoleum.

I followed her glance, past Hapshash and Mandragora and Negresca, to the slender, taut-bodied stranger scooping fish from the pond: beetle-wings, black and yellow, luminescent spots glowing on thighs and forearms, cat-whiskers, needle-sharp fangs. She looked toward me and our eyes met, a contact that seared me, and she laughed and her laughter shrivelled me with post-causal mockery, contra-linear scorn. In front of them all she destroyed me.

I fled. I am fleeing still. I may flee her forever.

"I can't wait to get into your pantyhose. They are one-size-fit-all, aren't they?"

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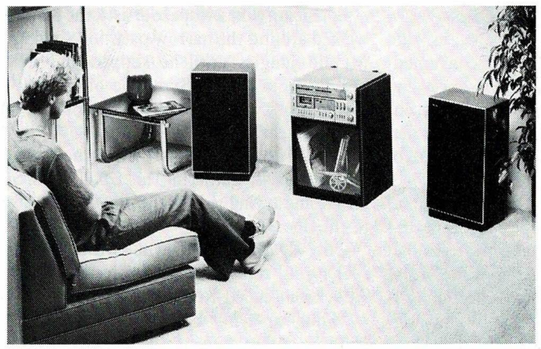

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DOPE *(continued from page 50)*

Only a year had passed since my first joint, but already my greed for weed was insatiable.

For consumption of the actual product, for sheer mindless abuse of the weed in all its forms, let's hear it for . . . the Melbourne Mutton Bird! (Lawyers prevent me using its real name.)

Dedicated to trivial indiscretions in high places, erroneous gossip and sanctimonious advice, the Bird squawked and flapped off the presses once a week to an eager public of punters, whores, car salesmen, cops and factory workers.

It was produced by a cruel and ugly group of men and women whose scorn for their public led to terrible confrontations in which readers were chased sobbing from the premises, or threatened with sexual violence.

The Bird's main role seemed to be to provide sanctuary for the balding alcoholics and hirsute drug addicts working there. The alcoholics, troubled endlessly by burst blood vessels and slipped discs, were always on long service leave.

Which left most of the work to me, Grunter, Mr Crackle, the Dark Dwarf, Attackman and Phlegmboyant. I remember a photo of this group, after a long lunch at the Falcon Hotel, gathered on the steps of the Bird's editorial offices.

Twisted by the usual surfeit of Thai heads, eyes unaligned, jaws lolling, the Bird Staffers have stuck a pose characteristic of Henry Miller and friends in Paris — overcoat collars up, men of consumate experience who wear their brain damage proudly.

While Hepworth, Neville, Leunig and the *Nation Review* crowd were swilling red wine in Carlton cafes, the men from the Bird — with typical absence of class — had lunch each day in the back of a Falcon panel van. Parked in a squalid lot between gloomy warehouses, the Falcon Hotel contained impressive supplies of super-quality dope, dried seahorses, porn magazines, Polish sausage, loud music . . . an atmosphere so thick with depravity that passing deroes would wince when they glanced inside.

Only a year had passed since my first joint that memorable sunlit night, but already — thanks to the accident of being hired by the Bird — my greed for weed was insatiable.

It was a period when everyone seemed preoccupied with dope; instead of the stern and demanding workplace I had expected when leaving NZ, my first Australian newspaper was a surreal mental home where the editor (on the morning I applied for a job) sat naked at his desk arm-wrestling a VFL footballer in a gorilla suit.

Drugs of all kinds were in big demand within the media back then, but the Bird — whose real name must be protected — differed in that its staff used drugs on the job: the more sensitive or difficult an assignment, the more drugs they used.

Consequently they were appallingly rude, ill-informed, clumsy and offensive. Anyone who has watched a mutton bird taking off — the spastic, stumbling, downhill plummet, the raucous squawks of fear and anger — will get the picture.

And Bird men, predictably, had frightful memories. They would ring Bob Hawke at the ACTU and then think they were speaking to Mike Willesee; or they would ring Willesee to check on his rumored heart condition, lose thread and ask whether he had just fathered a love baby.

When these busy citizens became angry and abusive — Bob Hawke seemed particularly touchy (ha ha) — the righteous Bird reps would always take it as a monstrous and unjustified personal criticism.

Easily the worst at this was Mr Crackle.

He joined the Bird six months after me and was named for his habit of masturbating, without removing his trousers or opening his fly, in the back stalls at dirty movies. He called it his Patented Cinema Wanking Technique and admitted that even when he masturbated at home he "never took it out".

"I can't stand the feel of it," he explained.

Because he wasn't a regular bath-taker — was, in fact, a newly-arrived Pom — Mr Crackle usually sounded like a tonne of diet crackers in a wine press: trousers brittle with evidence of his perfectly English perversion.

And if Mr Crackle was the rudest Big Rude Boy, he was also the greediest.

After one three-hour session in the Falcon Hotel, Mr Crackle had consumed three foot-long Buddha joints. I once saw him eat half a raw mullet he found at 1am on a Phillip Island beach: just scoffed it on the spot, eyeing the rest of us as if we wanted to steal if from him.

Mr Crackle, I know now, was responsible for the level of my own dope consumption. As a newcomer to drugs and professional depravity, I assumed the Big Rude Boys were a representative cross-section of Australian journalists, and that by smoking a little less than Mr Crackle I could have fun but avoid complete degeneration.

But after three years with the Bird, the habits of the Falcon Hotel were hopelessly ingrained. The Falcon ritual was always a prelude to another Bird tradition: reader taunting.

Every afternoon, like lemmings, Bird readers would ride the old lift to the editorial offices with their tedious complaints about faulty vacuum cleaners, used car rip-offs and cruel landlords.

That's when Attackman would work out.

He was smallish, dapper, always well dressed and freshly shaven. His hair was neat and his fingernails spotless.

He was the one the readers made for, gratefully, when they picked him out among the rest of us. Attackman would greet them politely, get them a chair and listen, with a slight frown, for perhaps 30 seconds.

When it was obvious there was no story involved Attackman stood up and said: "If you can't successfully purchase a vacuum cleaner, madam, there is no hope for you in this life. Now go away!"

And they never would, of course.

They would argue. They would rant and scream until the office dog (tied to a chair near the reception desk) rushed over with the chair bouncing behind it, barking joyously, sometimes tangling itself with the reader's legs, and everyone would be up shouting and jostling, some siding with the reader, some with Attackman — others, like animals infected by the fight, would howl and bay at their typewriters.

Once, when Attackman was dealing with a man who wanted to sell us the story of a defunct highwire act, Mr Crackle removed his shoes and socks, rolled up his trousers and climbed on to a filing cabinet where he crouched malevolently crying, "Pieces of eight!"

The old trapeze artist kept right on abusing Attackman and yelling: "Circus! I worked for a goddam circus for 10 years but you buncha dirty freaks are a bigger circus than anything! Where's the editor of this shit rag?"

And like magic, the editor appeared, back from a three-hour lunch drinking beer and arm wrestling. Wasted as usual, he took in the familiar scene of his staff handling a complaint, did a zany little soft shoe shuffle and climbed right up on to the partition between his office and the newsroom.

Balancing (like a trapeze artist), the editor walked around the narrow partition singing Mr Bo Jangles until he slipped and fell heavily from sight. (Symbolic of the way Bird editors were axed at the rate of about six each year.)

"You'll pay for this!" screamed the trapeze artist, gathering his 20,000-word article and trying to kick the dog on his way to the door.

Only Dark Dwarf, who wrote about rock'n'roll, refused to be involved in what Attackman called Reader Liaison.

"Shut up you bastards!" He would scream, still typing as the crowd surged around him. "Shut up or I'll kill the fucking lot of you!"

The Bird was a lifestyle that scarred us all. Like the title of the Jimmy Buffett song, it was a place where people grew older but not up . . . where wild-eyed Peter Pans shared a fantasy world long enough to seriously damage whatever grasp they once had on reality.

For years afterwards, whenever I thought about the Bird or described it, the urge to get ripped was irresistable. Even now, sigh, as a former dope smoker, I smell the interior of the Falcon Hotel (or is it Mr Crackle?) and pine for the gladness of heart and babbling euphoria inspired by six or seven of Grunter's reckless numbers.

The Bird's period of unfettered craziness ended when its owner, probably for the first time in years, looked closely at his paper. Among the stylised junk that was supposed to be there he must have noticed other things . . . peculiar film reviews, long-winded and obscure pieces of alleged humor, a disproportionate number of stories about new and dangerous drugs.

So he cleaned the place out, put in a business-like editor who demanded *real* stories and had the office dog sacked. When I left, the remnants of the Big Rude Boys chipped in and bought me a lobster and a red sleeping bag.

Which seemed about right.

●

And ever since I've been trying to reduce the intake. In 1979 dope became so difficult to obtain in the State where we now live that I gave it up for two months . . . right after an incident that almost cured my yearnings permanently.

Dope dealers, let's face it, are not usually preferred company. They tend to be sedentary, conniving little devils — walking advertisements, in fact, for a dope-free life.

They are infuriatingly vague and never at home when you need them, and when they are at home their phones have been disconnected or they're listening to the headphones and don't hear you knocking.

For people who deal in marijuana, most dealers seem oddly humorless. It's very difficult to avoid them droning on about civil liberties and inner-city housing problems while you sit in the darkened lounge fighting an urge to turn them in.

Very young dealers bother me a lot, ever since a friend and I called at an address to score and found the place alive with business-like teeny boppers selling everything from barbituates to heroin. It was like a latter-day Dickens' tale: swarms of children as young as 13 for whom drugs spelled recreation, security, income and future. A gang of them sat watching the TV without sound, cartoons I think, yet no one laughed or showed any reaction.

Watching their blank and strangely feral small faces, I felt a reaction — these kids had made drugs a lifestyle without any real experience of adult life. No one — not even Mr Crackle — would approve of kids using drugs . . . and yet the sordidness of that house, which we were pleased to leave empty-handed, was not solely due to the kids. There is something basically sad about drugs.

Like the ageing Marijuana Party man, or a bad drunk. So I haven't felt quite the same about dope since meeting the teeny dealers. There is a key to all this: enthusiasm.

On the Mutton Bird, the Big Rude Boys did everything with energy and conviction. We smoked to get truly ripped and then, like wind-up toys, we clattered and chattered and zoomed about until our springs needed rewinding.

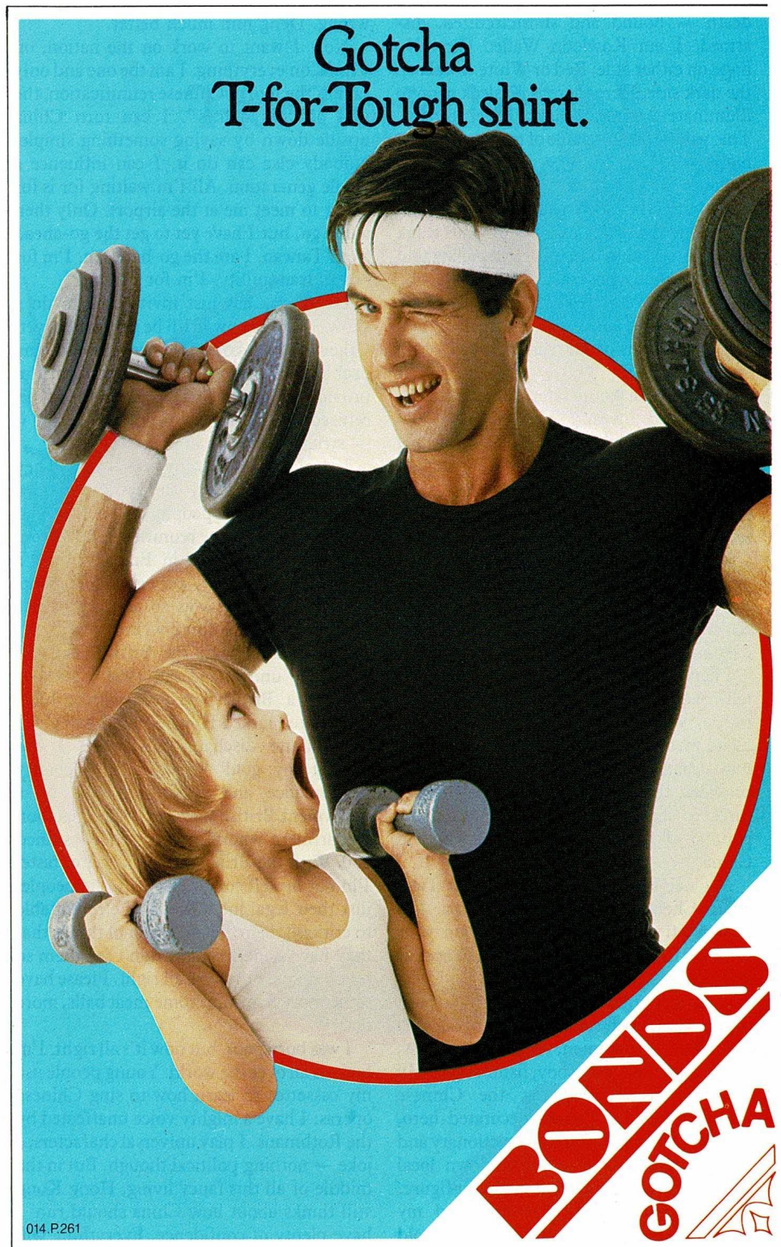
But using dope or booze or any drug mechanically, without enthusiasm (as with my subservience to that vile Amsterdam hashish) is a waste of money and a destroyer of vitality.

There have been people, like Janis Joplin and Jimi Hendrix, whose enthusiasm for drugs and booze was above reproach. And it killed them. So the idea seems to be to save up your enthusiasm, not spend it all at once, nor fritter it away in worthless daily doses.

Reading this back it seems to have been written by two conflicting personalities; cheerily debauched someone and someone closely resembling the Rev. Fred Nile. Picture them locked in ideological combat and you have an outline of mid-life crisis.

As I said, it could continue for years. If the Rev. Fred wins, I'll send my next dispatch to *Reader's Digest*. Meanwhile, down with dope.

Except on rare and special occasions.



HONG KONG 1997 (continued from page 96)

"I have been eating opium for 46 years and tell everybody that it is for medical purposes."

and other neon signs, pink, green, blue, red, yellow, orange. A bright active administrative, commercial city, an architectural fashion show of stone, glass, steel, papers, decisions, marketing of the future. A colorful modern cliche.

I have been rejected, criminalised. Thrown into the disintegrating roots of a death — bound and shortcircuited, disarmed. I am Kowloon Walled City. No hope on either side; Red or White. I walk on the dark side. Here there is no sleek neon to illuminate a tranquil night. I feel so tired. This will be the last game of mahjong for the night.

●

Reunification between China, Taiwan and Hong Kong: "A number of loons think they can pull that one off," journalists told us. We went to meet one. On the right side of the tracks, in a cafe overlooking the Hong Kong Jockey Club, we met the secretary and bodyguards of Mr Tang, Hong Kong's "ol' blue eyes".

Twenty-four hours later, same place, we were picked up and whisked in a gold Mercedes through the Hong Kong tunnel to the backstreets of Kowloon. Mr Tang has a dream that transcends 1997.

MR TANG'S STORY

I am a megalomaniac. I am what you'd call a weird character. I'm 67 years old, extremely busy, active and eclectic. I sing, dance, mimic, act, make up. I like disguises. I'm a man of resources.

I have been eating opium for 46 years and tell everybody that it is for medical purposes. My story is perfect. I threw up blood when I was 21 — opium is the cure for my stomach problems. I'm now being provided the stuff. It's a requisite for my career. People like me very much. I am popular all over Hong Kong, Taiwan and China.

My name is San Mat Tsai, born Tang Wing Cheung in Kwantung, China. I'm known off stage as Mr Tang. I am your Callas, a Chinese Charlie Chaplin (I appear and people laugh) your Laurence Olivier. I'm a singer of Chinese operas. I'm serious, comic, deep, entertaining, moving. I play old men, old women, delicate princess, servant, butcher, page boy, fishmonger. My repertoire is as wide as the Chinese continent. I'm a Taiwan decorated hero, crooner, actor, kid, mafiosi, reactionary and self-made man. I'm a toned down local version of Salvador Dali, a surrealist figure. I'm married to a rich woman and my chauffeur drives me round in a big gold Mercedes. I made it, and I like the fun.

I am still quite young looking. I am not yet ready to retire. Silver Rivers General Entertainment Association Limited is my club; Mr Eddie, double-breasted suit and Fu Manchu moustache, runs it. People play mahjong. The hostess girls look very nice.

I'm a liberal, like 99 percent of Chinese here. And I like Taiwan and the liberal way of doing things. "Mao he wrong, he very wrong. Deng him much better."

Now I want to work on the nation, on China, on everything. I am the one and only savior, the tool of Chinese reunification, the idol of "ces dames". I can turn China upside down by saying something simple. Nobody else can do it. I can influence a whole generation. All I'm waiting for is for Deng to meet me at the airport. Only then will I go, but I have yet to get the go-ahead from Taiwan. I am the go-between. I'm for peace, tranquillity. I'm for China.

Las Vegas has just invited me to do a show. I don't know if I'll be going there yet. Other Asian countries understood my problem, and when I come to perform I'm provided. Canada, the US, have so far refused, but now they are reconsidering it — strictly for medical purposes.

I feel friendly with the west. They brought some good things and I like freedom. I want people to be free and happy. My aim is the reunification. My son, he's very well known in England. He's a painter. Very good — very good. He paints cats. The last one was so real, just like a photograph. He's doing well.

I'm friendly with the British. I'm not sure they understand. In 1964 I tried to procure a British passport with a birth certificate marked Hong Kong. I was given an absolute discharge. As when I was driving my gold Mercedes to a charity performance and I was reported by a malevolent British member of the Taxation Department whom I overtook. I was fined $50. With the British it is a matter of taste. I'm not myself so familiar with the people, just their legal institutions. We're not able to criticise them. There's a lot of things that they have done wrong. I don't see them so much. I guess they are all right. Please have some more Samsum, some meat balls, more tea.

I was born poor, but now it's all right. I'm famous all over the world. Young people use my cassettes to learn how to sing Chinese operas. I have a mighty voice unaffected by the Rothmans. I play universal characters, I joke — nothing political though. But in the middle of all this fancy living, Hong Kong still thinks about how China should run. I have plenty of confidence. Everything will run smooth and easy. I guarantee I work for peace: 1997 is no deadline.

Here comes my bodyguard. I have to protect myself. I sent my chauffeur to check on you before you got into my car. You might have been killers. One must beware. You look young and I like you. My secretary is also a young man. He helps me with my work. I'm a very busy man. I have many appointments. He saves me a lot of time. I like young people. They're still very traditional. Fashion is where the west has come in. It's okay, that is the way it goes. I don't like disco music though. Can't say I'm in tune with new bands. I'm still Chinese. I've never travelled west. I might accept the Las Vegas show if it brings people together.

Money is the big thing. Gambling is the motto. People, they want to have fun; the stock exchange, the races, the buying of gold. People, they're not free in China. We will go to China. Inch by inch, step by step, bye and bye. We must be careful.

My links are devious. I must keep a lot of things secret. But I trust in the future. You know China is more important than communism.

●

Zhao has tried cutting up Hong Kong and Chinese newspapers — horizontally and vertically — but his literary attempt at reunification brought him no cash. He is now forced to steal to indulge in video games. It is the only fun he has left.

SWEEN'S STORY

We suddenly got carried away at the Waltzing Matilda bar — a seedy looking pub in Kowloon, another nostalgic transplant of beer and discreet British fun. Sween was classy. He knew it and played on it. He liked our haircuts and had all the time in the world. He had modelled, run the only new wave venue in Hong Kong, a failure; "Hong Kong wasn't ready for it."

Sween had an international flavor with some markedly local spice. A stateless person, he'd fled from Vietnam, he now lived in New York. Sween wasn't wearing the regulation Fiorruci copy jeans and clean-cut Dior wear — the hot brands for a coolie youth.

Fashion was the latest game in this town, along with video games. A copy freak city, Hong Kong makes the clothes for the west but "try to put on a fashion show here and you'll have to mix it with a wine tasting evening", laughs Jenny, a bleached blonde, laid-off punk hairdresser.

We never found out much about Sween, an almost cliched version of the mysterious Asiatic, despite his glibness and his eagerness to introduce us into the arcanes of western-oriented Hong Kong, and to a few admittedly essential popular landmarks of the island. He sounded the ideal Cicerone for an east-west confrontation.

"Do people just eat sizzling brochettes, clams, shrimps, oysters until two in the morning in the street cafes." Sween laughs and drawls out in perfect English, but with too many hisses in his words: "Hong Kong is not only watching you. Hong Kong is boring." The picture was almost complete. On top of it he was blase. "I'll take you to see some graphic artist friends."

Illustration workshop: eight loons who work together, travel together and take their inspiration from the west and east. Their minimal design studio on Hong Kong Island looks over Victoria Park and the harbor. Delicately framed photos of the group hang on the wall; rosy cheeks, lit-up china doll-like faces, fancy bow ties, Colgate smiles, plastic framed glasses — boys on the run, fashion wild. Mao stares with a square-framed, hanging-out tongue. Sex and the leaders. "We don't talk about that in China — imagine being turned on by them. I can't."

The boys have learnt the lesson. They are good at irony. A western concept, like graphics for that matter, or new music. Phillip Kwok, the self delegated representative of the bunch, is wry and riotous in his own post-Confucian way. He looks and sounds like a Chinese simile of Doug Ireland.

"People come to see our shows and spend a lot of time scratching their heads and asking why these guys are doing this." No doubt a Paris, London or New York crowd would respond more easily to the sophisticated, but somehow passe commercial design.

What happens to the little dragon, so innovative at profit making, when it comes to culture?

"Well, they all have their heads stuck to the west."

Paris, London, New York are the dream places, but also Tokyo, rising, rising like a glittering commercial sun.

"I guess it is the Chinese influence, and then the British certainly didn't help." So much for the weight of tradition and past. "It has to do with the nature of the nation. The Chinese won't try everything and anything like the Americans."

They want money. The stock exchange and gold is their trip. Compared to the few cheap porn mags and kids' comics, the whole place is innundated with papers and reviews devoted to these things. Even the poorest people in the New Territories are driven by money.

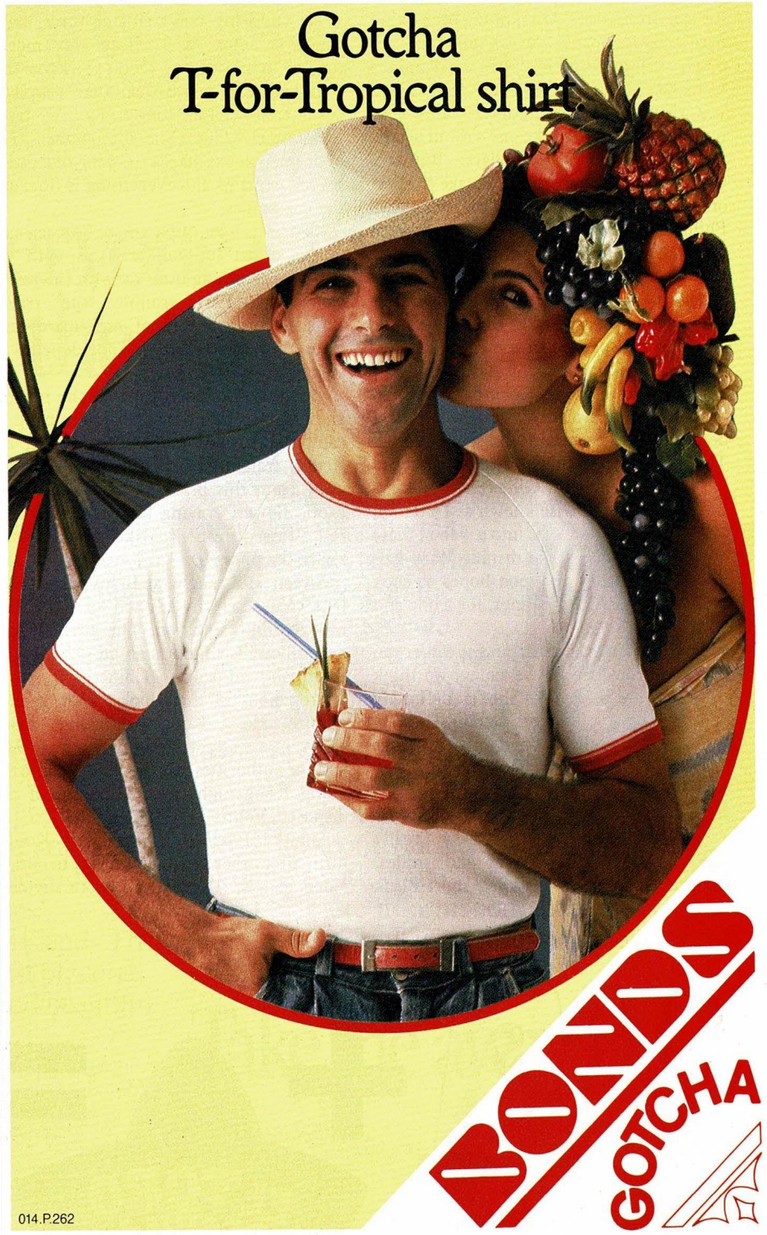
"All they're interested in is how to sell our land," Phillip booms out as he once again reaches for the telephone. "As for 1997, well people think about it a little and then they stop thinking and go back to the stock exchange. This is the attitude. There might be a small group of people at the Hong Kong University who frequently discuss the topic over lunch."

They have travelled to China quite often. To see friends and get ideas. They like having fun, too. They have a collection of postcard portraits that they play with, sending them to China and asking them to be sent back. Some come back, others never make it.

"Take this postcard celebrating youth, purity, wholesomeness." Taut thighs, athletic biceps, tight-fitting leather shorts, starry eyes, a mythical version of German or Californian homo mag drawings, but the model has slant eyes.

"If the Chinese see this they'll say fine. They're promoting us. They're influencing people internationally. They are picking up on this thing. They're proud of us. They're really naive in a way — through lack of exposure. What they are definitely not picking up on is the most important thing of the guy being there. Take that one now." A revolutionary marching postcard with Chinese youth majestically and colorfully gripping an ambiguous flag marked Hong Kong. "Well that never arrived." Now you see me, now you don't kind of thing. "An underground Chinese sculptor friend of ours didn't even want to keep it in his possession." Contacts are still difficult. It is all this political thing. The whole revolutionary program. It is aimed at educating only a limited number of people in our sense. And the rest will be very loyal, working and very happy, and the minute they see a Red flag they'll go whoopee."

Tommy, author of the cards, brings in a set of delicate Chinese-looking prints of banal landscapes and rural sites, but more geometrical, more clean-cut. Of the whole



group, he is the one most interested in Chinese graphics. Tommy is shy and competent. His graphics are more devious, his irony more Chinese. He hardly intrudes into ready-made Chinese art, his message is for the sharp-eyed.

"But I mean we're paranoid about 1997. We were before, and we still are now. But what can you do? If they come, I'll put my hands up. Many people have this feeling that the richest people in Hong Kong are trying to make the best out of the next 15 years, and then they'll say bye bye. What the hell. They have all this money. They can do whatever they like. Not that they do that much."

The talk veers to Berlin, New York, no future, decadence. "Oh nothing of the kind here. These people have some fun, but they're still respectable. There is still money to make. They have sex sometimes. Mind you, they need the aphrodisiac clams — so busy. So difficult to take one's mind off the hypnotic millions of dollars. But we, without the money, can only make the best of ourselves. Excuse me please." And Phillip rushes off to the next room to watch his favorite Chinese soap box show.

"There is a lot of boredom here," Sween picks up. That much we were to know after we left the neat studio. In the lift we smile over the photograph of a macho, leather-outfitted Phillip, making faces under a plastic made-in-Hong-Kong palm tree.

"You like this place?" we asked. "Oh, I don't know. I have no feelings any more." The local femmes fatale exude the blues.

"I'm 18, I'm 19." Gilbert alias Mary-Lee, Daniel, otherwise known as Deborah, immediately entangle us into a web of blase nonchalance, spleen and drinks. Mary-Lee is still phallic but she soon hopes to cook breakfast, lunch, and dinner, for a one and only man.

At 18 she has seen it all, but she can't even make-up. She tries to be saucy, we think she's just messed up. She is definitely hopeless.

Disco-Disco, the one and only club, is as bright and exciting as its name. New Romantic clones swan past, trading pills and grass.

"Opium," she says. "How freaky. I really like you." All pouts, eyes and smiles, Deborah in her self-designed short black dress giggles like a fresh widow ready to fall into an officer's arms. "You are from Paris." Montana, Lagerfeld, Kruger — she is the magazine freak with some style. She'll almost faint later on. She's moody, whimsical. She's perfect, we thought. She'll be a right pain in the arse.

Deborah likes Japan. She is saving up money, but can't quite make it on the side. She has a wonderful memory for poses.

"Let's go," Sween says. Three o'clock in the morning and a bowl of noodles, ham and eggs, is awaiting us at the stand around the corner — a makeshift night spot in a back lane, beside newspaper sellers bundling up the early morning papers. Sween meticulously guides us through the night.

He suddenly bows and gestures like a Japanese actor in a cheap war movie, turning to his officer. "Don't you know that a gathering of more than four people is considered a riot in Hong Kong." We try to add ourselves up. Six all together. The policeman looks like a 16-year-old cadet. Sween explains and everything is fine, and the cop smiles.

"There is a lot of paranoia," Sween says in his effort to familiarise us with the situation. Nothing unusual with the recent riots, the 1967 trouble, the triads. Financiers are afraid of nightmares and disorder. Business, Hong Kong depends on stability.

Deborah suddenly leaps on the parapet and launches into her schizophrenic bit. "I can't stand it any more. The Chinese are small, straight and stupid. I want to get away from this place." She looks like an exotic flower, craving for Perrier-watered soil. "I need fresh air." She certainly has a knack for phrases.

Sween, still caught up in his perfect host trip, contradictorily advised for some deep root trip into tradition. The girls, flagged out, followed without a smile.

British influence, Chinese customs: androgynous in their looks, androgynous culture. Hong Kong youth live, many claim, in a straight-jacket. They fear 1997, and the authorities fear them. A trip into the Hong Kong night with displaced, if not disposed, youth.

January 1982 — it was Hong Kong's turn, after other Asian countries, to outlaw video games. The experts were divided; some believed they helped kids' ability to concentrate and were perfect for the computer age. Others say that with them ideological control of minds, highly developed in interpreting rhythmic dots and lines, becomes so much easier.

In the following years, in both the subterranean world of Hong Kong and southern China, to where they were smuggled, video games flourished, ripping through Chinese youth like the opiate of a new age.

The rocky outcrop off Hong Kong island which was the former drug rehabilitation centre became the home of video game delinquents. But the rage never ceased. As 1997 approached, the authorities put the game to good use.

"Living on the Edge" — a program structurally devised by the best popular entertainers, aided by education experts, was the most popular.

The Pink Set made the most of it. They were perfect at space tricks. They were quick. The best of these silicon chipped hooligans were trained to be the Pretorian guard of Hong Kong's post-1997 society.

●

"Hong Kong Free Port, Hong Kong Free Port. Welcome to New China. Financial and commercial guides are now at your disposal.

"Please feel free to ask."

"This way please." Everything was speedily and efficiently organised. They felt themselves wafted into the latest Rolls-Royce model, past a maze of brightly-lit highways into a city of rocketing scrapers like a set of urban canyons.

They hardly felt the upmoving of the air-conditioned lift. They were now sitting on soft plushy armchairs. From invisible speakers flowed a poetic voice.

"Plastic group reported operating revenue of net dollars 11.3 billion in the first half of the year 1998, a 10.6 percent increase on the same period last year. Earnings per share rose from net dollar 1.18 to net dollar 1.74 per share."

Watching over them was the framed picture of San Ho, venerated father of the Unmanageability Plan — the 1997 mastermind.

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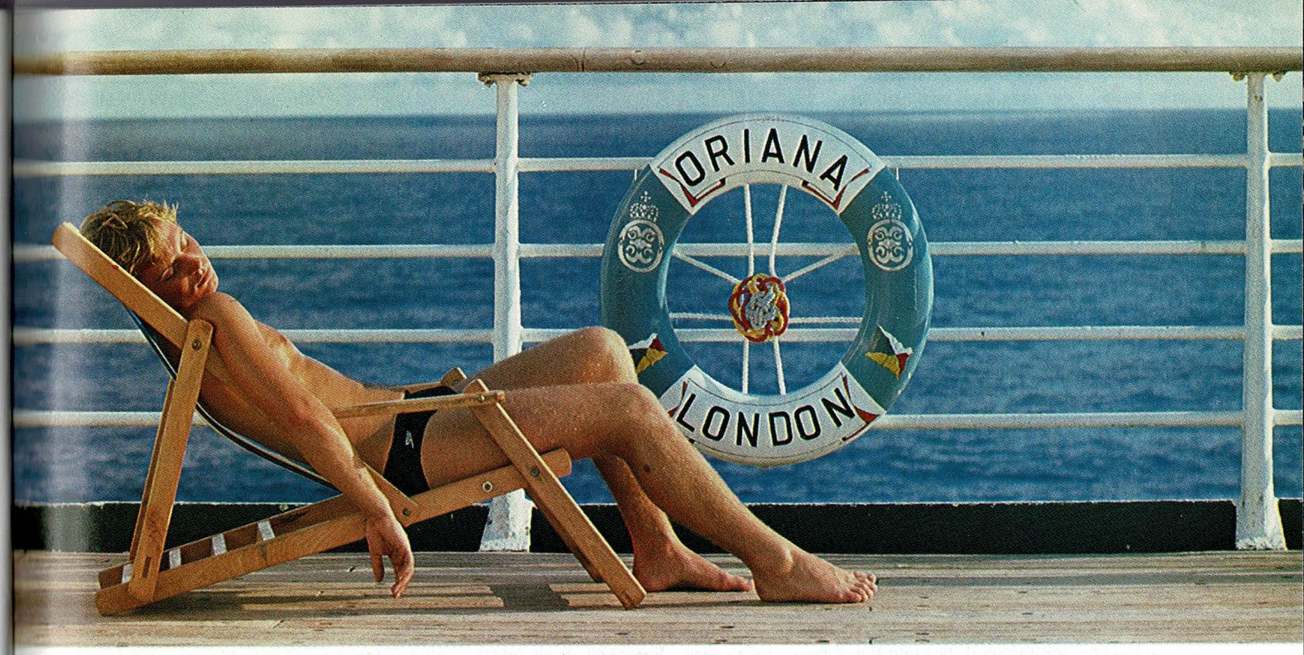

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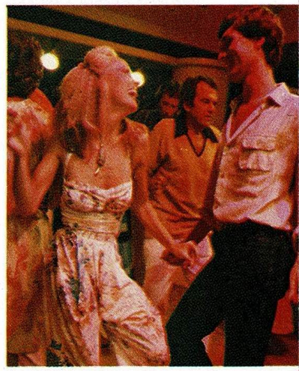

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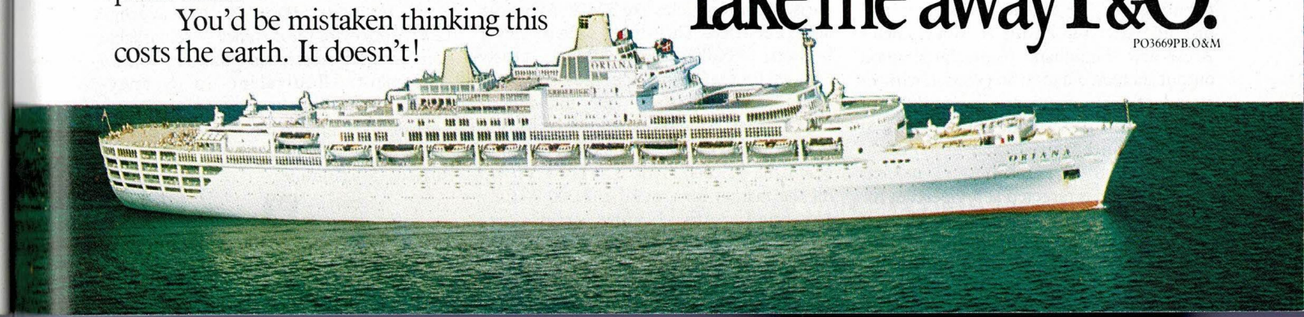

SIX APPEAL

(continued from page 86)

The GTV V6 stands as a symbolic vanguard of Alfa's new-wave attack on the market.

ically at cones, talking animatedly, waving hands, probably to keep the cold at bay. Some are from the nearby semi-punk disco, "Plastic", others en route from theatre to home. Nothing strange here, except all of them have tried to park directly outside the bar. About two-thirds have succeeded, although many of these are on the footpath, scattered across the roadway, on the median strip. A Ritmo (the smallest Fiat) is parked with its nose in the door. Eventually, as more people arrive, the street is choked solid. Horns start to cheep. There is no response. Save for salutory responses from other horns. Chaos ensues. There is waving and much laughter. Some smaller cars squeeze past on the footpath, beeping the thronging crowd out of the way. Each is cheered through, as if clearing control on some special rally stage. Then the Carabineri arrives. Chaos is protracted. . .

●

"There are three millions cars too much in the world today," says Alfa Romeo Commercial Director, Dr Ing. Gianfranco Bellandi in almost-perfect English, at Alfa Romeo's Arese plant. Street scenes like the one at the gelateria tend to suggest most of them are in Italy. Yet Alfa has a problem — a new problem. It is over-producing cars. And not because its sales are down.

For the first time Alfa has got its Alfasud plant at Pomigliano D'Arco up to full steam (since 1972 it has been plagued by industrial problems), but not by the most conventional method. In fact it was achieved by standing workers down! It all started late last year, when Alfa perceived the depth of its over-production problem when undercover stockpile space ran out and cars spilled into open storage yards. Alfa put a package to the Cassa Integrazione (funded by manufacturers) and the Trade Union groups to stand down 5800 workers at two plants for 12 months under the plan by which the workers get proportionate payment compensations, administered by the Government — a dream scheme for unions and workers alike. A surprise result of the stand-downs was the confirmation of a theory that western world manufacturers and economists have long suspected — the original workforce was overblown, contributing to inefficiency, disquiet and dispute. After the layoffs at Alfa Romeo's Arese and Pomigliano plants, production output increased a total 40 percent, with an attendant improvement in quality of workmanship. At the same time, days lost to strikes/disputes halved, and absenteeism dropped from 19 percent to 11 percent overnight, and is targeted at 5-7 percent for 1982 at current progress figures. Fantastico! "An economic miracle", as the Italians hailed it at Torino. But not without cost in the form of some serious social ramifications and, of course, Alfa's continued over-production.

Which leaves the vigorous Italian manufacturer jammed firmly in a cleft stick.

There may be some escape routes. Alfa has also sought to reduce manufacturing costs by offsetting development and production with other companies — forming important alliances with Fiat, and jumping visibly into bed with Nissan with whom it has formed a joint manufacturing project to build 60,000 new-model Alfasuds at the new Alfa-Nissan A.R.N.A. plant from next year. For Alfa it is extra production and vital cost-cutting, for Nissan, otherwise prohibited from the Italian market by law, it is the only way to get the foot in the door.

To beat Bellandi's projection of "a handful of manufacturers left in the world by the end of the Eighties", Alfa is getting into high-tech vehicle design and production. And model diversification within its own narrow market confines.

So it is that the company is spending millions on turbochargers (to be promoted via the 1983 race program) and will have a range of diesel and petrol turbos on world markets next year. There is a range of new 4 x 4s, with important military contracts attached, and vital export potential (particularly in markets like Australia where commercials are freely admitted). Of course the new Alfasud and Nissan-Alfasud are coming, the Alfa Spider has been reintroduced, giving it a lifespan of 16 years with attendant economies of scale for Alfa, the Giulietta is one of Italy's most successful cars, and there is a whole range of new models projected on the Alfetta body.

And then there is this car — the GTV V6 2.5 litre, Alfa's new flagship, since the V6 sedan has enjoyed limited market acceptance everywhere.

The GTV gives Alfa in Australia a market span from $11,000 to $32,000. By comparison with the home-market prices of many other European sporty or luxury cars with big images, it is notably better priced — particularly in head-to-head comparisons with vehicles like BMW, Mercedes and Porsche. The Sud sedans hover between $11,000 and $12,000, nearly $16,000 for the Sprint. The Alfettas come in at $17,000-plus (above the mid-ranged Giulietta at $16,000-plus), and the top Sportiva and GTV are priced just above and below the $19,000 mark. The GTV V6 will hit the market for around $32,000 — fully equipped with luxury trim, air-conditioning, radio-cassette, alloy wheels etc — equivalent to an effective baseprice of about $25,000.

But there is more. I believe Alfa Romeo will introduce an Alfasud panel van early in 1983, and the 4 x 4 could be here by late '83 or early '84. Some injection of the diesel engine into the model mix can be expected, there is some slim chance of getting more Alfasuds in under the Nissan program, and Alfa is trying some outside moves too.

One is the brainwave of Alfa Australia's current ebullient Managing Director, Ruggero Rotondo, who has come to terms with the end-of-the-line decisions on import by the Federal Government — a battle hard-fought, but lost, by his predecessor, the respected Dr Silvano Tagini. Faced with those limitations, Rotondo proposes attacking the possibility of import credits — perhaps against the supply of Australian aluminium — raw material or even manufactured product.

In any event, the GTV V6 stands as a symbolic vanguard of Alfa's new-wave attack on the market.

●

MUNICH, GERMANY, SUNDAY MORNING: I locate the Mitlerering ring-road at Nymphenberg from my hotel, and carve through the Sunday dawdlers around to the Salzburg Autobahn. At precisely 10.45am the Nurnberg-Salzburg autobahn joins-up, signalling the city limits. As the blurring lanes blend, I merge with a fully-modded Mahle Mercedes 500SE, draft him for a kilometre, flash, pull out and pass. Moving on to 240km/h I settle down in the outside lane with the Merc tucked in behind, sporting spoilers, air dam, wide wheels, and two enthusiastic skiers in the cockpit. Twenty minutes later I peel off onto the Innsbruck autobahn.

I run on through the Brenner Pass where last night's snow has already melted, and down through the vines and trees of northern Italy, where the cliffs are hung with spring foliage cascading off sheer escarpments. For 30 minutes the speedo does not register less than 220km/h on the uncrowded Italian autobahn as the car slices through sweepers, and steadfastly ignores a brisk sidewind, gusting viciously between the many tunnels. There is more traffic on the Brescia-Milano autostrada which cuts the cruise speed to !80km/h for safety reasons, but as I pull into Alfa's Portello plant in Milano the stopwatch reads 3 hrs, 15mins for a 172km average touring speed, over 560km including two border gates, three toll stations, and a refuel stop. Fuel used is equivalent to an average 12.81/100km for the distance — remarkable even without Australian pollution control equipment. Equivalent to Sydney-Melbourne in 4 hours 10 mins at 22mpg. Yet safe and comfortable — as easy as a run to the outer suburbs. Mica male, Alfa Romeo. Grazie mille.

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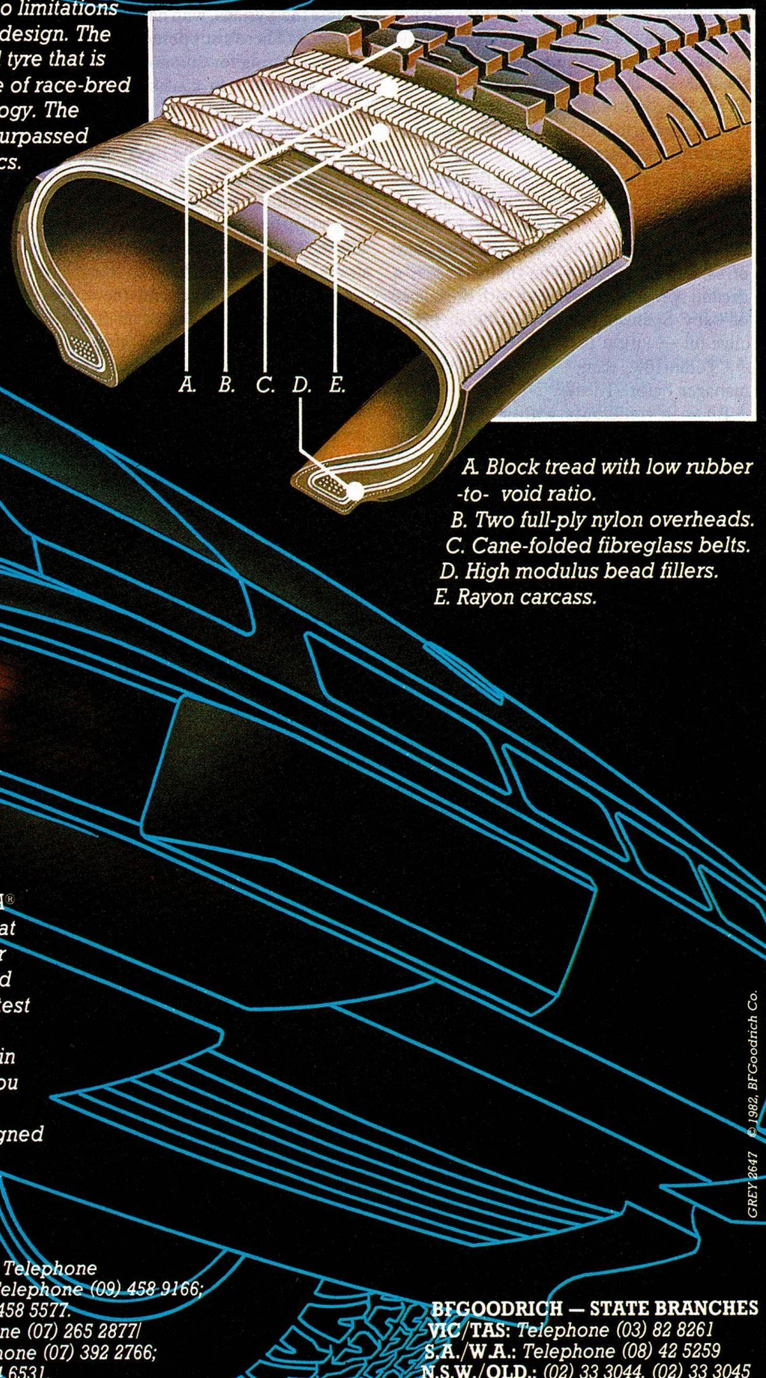

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SLOW BURN *(continued from page 66)*

Night time is fighting time in Lebanon; but here in Baalbek, in the country, the militia men keep pretty cool.

again. The moonlight scatters silver beams off the Roman columns that rise out of the rubble of scattered stones.

On a balcony further down the street a young man leans out and I hear him putting one up the slot of his Kalshnikov. Night time is fighting time in Lebanon; but here in Baalbek the militia men keep pretty cool. This is the country. The air is crisp and clean; no one's going to foul it up with gun-powder. Certainly not tonight.

"Don't walk too far," a voice floats across the square. I nod, and enter the restaurant. The mezza is superb: pistachios, peanuts, fat salt encrusted pumpkin seeds, a big plate of salad and pickles. The thyme vert is a dream: sprigs of fresh thyme with thin slices of baby Spanish onions floating in green olive oil — virgin pressed.

"Tomorrow, 8am," says the restaurant manager before I leave.

Ali is in conference with a nun when I arrive the next morning. Presumably she knows his wealth stems from hashish, but in this weird world, will she care? Ali is a parent of one of her pupils, and a benefactor of the school, one of a number of Christian schools in Zahle, a town down the Beirut road.

Should she question anything? Ali is a Shi'ite Muslim, but like many of the Jaffa family sends his children to Christian schools. The Syrian Army, which came into Lebanon to help the Christians fight against the Muslim rebels, last Christmas blew a couple of Christian suburbs of Zahle off the map. Syria has a few SAM missiles in the vineyards down the road, which Israel keeps threatening to bomb unless they are removed. Why should the nun worry that her school is funded by drug money? That's the least of her worries. She could be killed by any of half a dozen armies or militia groups that have bases in the area — or by a sniper with nothing else to shoot at.

When she leaves, Ali tells me business is bad. The new season's crop is about to be planted, but much of last season's is still bagged and waiting in the locked garages of the Jaffa enclave. Some European sales are desperately needed. The Arab boycott on trade with Egypt because of its peace with Israel makes it difficult, almost impossible, to trade with Egypt. There's a tonne of dope stinking out his lounge-room, for which he could ask no more than 5000 Lebanese pounds a bag (about $US40 a kilo, pressed to whatever shape you specify) from an Egyptian buyer, but which he could get much much more for if he could get it to Europe — say Marseilles or Naples — or even on to an American yacht off Tripoli. But maybe there is hope. He's heard there's been a clean-up in Tripoli, as the Lebanese Army has begun to exert a greater influence. The Shi'ites and Phalange have been dealing with the Lebanese Army, Ali says, against the Syrians, who have outworn their welcome. There's supposed to be a boat off Tripoli, waiting for the snow to clear off the mountain roads so a truck can get down from Hermel.

It's the usual. Somebody from the particular family of the 5000-strong Jaffa clan handling the client will have to fly to Switzerland and see the cash in the strong box, and then he'll make a telephone call and the loading will begin. Except that not all the money can be there up front, a lot of it's needed back home, and the telephone may not work. If it comes off it's a lot of American dollars — but it's very chancey.

The days of the big kills are over. Any truck-load of furniture or olive oil or grapes coming down from Baalbek is fair game to any checkpoint or local militia. The big guys are no longer coming up to arrange hundred thousand dollar shipments, because they don't like the chances of getting the shit down — or the costs. There's been some awful burns. No one wants to risk a big shipment in one hit, and no one likes stringing the operation out by the dribs and drabs system: the losses are less, but the risks increase.

"We're just as much in favor of a strong police force as anyone," Ali says.

"It's just impossible with all this lawlessness. There's no order — you can't predict things. The law here — there is no law. Except the law of the gun. We look after our law. We're all right. There's six thousand of us in my family, and we have guns, grenades and things."

(Also tanks, according to a couple of sources.)

"But we don't want to carry guns. I don't like having to lock my gates and doors and windows. I'm surrounded by my family here — look, that house, family Jaffa; that one, family Jaffa, all houses here family Jaffa. Still, I have to have locks on my gate at night.

"We want a law, a police force. If there's trouble, they fix it; now, if it affects family Jaffa, we fix it; if not, no one fixes it."

It's somehow reassuring that one of the biggest drug dealers in the world wants a strong police force. Gangsters for Law & Order.

I'm thinking this waiting in the back of a Merc in the main square of Baalbek while the driver hussles up a few more passengers. A couple of Bedou ladies bring their babies up to the window to beg some backsheesh, but a drooling spastic attacks them and drives them off, between the tangle of donkey carts and late model Peugeots and Buicks and the occasional E-type or Chev convertible. (Cars stolen in Europe usually end up in the Lebanon.)

A figure darts out of the milling crowd and argues with the driver. He's a solid young bloke — nasty-looking, biting his lip nervously and looking around him all the time. He's got an automatic stuck down the back of his jeans. He disappears back into the crowd in a flurry of words, and 10 minutes later reappears and sits in the car. He's got a spare clip in his hands.

It appears he's not keen on going down the main road. Somebody down there is looking for him. The two other passengers and the driver try to convince him there'll be no trouble. All we want is to get going. So what if one of our passengers is all set to shoot it out with a pistol? At least we'd be on the way. We've been waiting around for two hours now and don't care who we travel with. Thank God he's smarter than we are and rushes off again, not to be seen again. He was as toey as a trapped tiger, an incident waiting to happen. Shows how lackadaisical you become about goons with guns.

We wouldn't have stood a chance if the shooting started.

Many checkpoints and a change of car later I get out at Mehtahf, the Museum crossover. A broad plaza divides the shattered empty flats of the "Green Line" from the racecourse, west of which live the teeming masses. Artillery is dug into the racecourse gardens, and the museum itself, looted of its treasures, is now a barracks. On the bad days people don't like driving through Mehtahf. The cabs drop you at one point and you walk up the empty footpath to cabs waiting a hundred metres across the square. It's one of those places where sharpshooters used to practise on real targets, but these days it can be crossed with safety, even if you can't shake off the eerie feeling that someone's watching you through gun sights.

Beirut is undoubtedly the world's most exciting city. Before 1975 the night life was the most extravagant this side of Montmatre; one club even had live horses charging up the stage. The casinos and luxurious beach hotels attracted big spenders from all over Europe and the Middle East. Today, the night life consists mainly of private parties where the guests like to stay overnight; a few dim bars frequented by people who live close by; and the crack, rat-a-tat and whoosh of the private armies.

You get used to the sound of gunfire at night, to the click of the houseguard's Kalshnikov, to the sight of pimply youths tearing around in Jeeps perched behind mounted heavy machine guns. After seven years, employers are used to the fact that every month or so some of their workers are unable to get across town because of "trouble", and that if they want to avoid that trouble getting too close, they must pay regular protection money to whatever militia group is responsible for their block. Even the Australian Embassy, I believe, is under the care of gunnies — Palestinians, no less.

In Lebanon, they practise democracy with guns. Power has devolved from the Presidential palace to the streets.

When I first went there in 1980 the Government had just resigned, but there was nobody else prepared to take over, so they had to carry on. It was not that the leaders were fearful of being assassinated (effective politicians are popular targets), it was more the frustration of not being able to do anything.

The authority of the Government is seen in the way traffic police are casually ignored. He can stop one line of traffic, but as soon as he turns his back, they drive on by him.

Perhaps the most amazing thing is that with the anarchy, the occupying armies, the street gangs with hand grenades, the unpaid taxes and occasional air raids, the country still continues to work — or at least get by. A new expressway has been completed, the garbage is collected — from time to time — the electricity works. The true heroes of the farcical tragedy of Lebanon are the people. There is a classic photograph from 1976 of a linesman working up a telegraph pole while below him masked militia men move up to attack unseen enemy forces across the street. He works on.

Today there are some 30 or 40 private armies hooning around the Lebanon. Besides the Lebanese Army, itself divided into independent groups, there are the Syrian Army — in the role of "peace-keepers" — the Palestinians, the Katayeb (also called the Christian Phalange), the National Movement (a loose coalition of the leftist forces), and AMAL, the Shi'ite Moslem army. Besides these are the various regional, village and family groups, obscure political and religious parties, and straight out street gangs. All groups at one time or another in the past seven years have shot at each other, or even at factions within themselves.

Because many of the political groups are funded by other Arab nations, it is possible to chart the ever-fluctuating alliances and political fortunes of the Arab world merely by seeing who is shooting who in Beirut.

The war and ensuing anarchy has been a bonanza for crooks. The Beirut banks, which stored much of the wealth of the oil-rich Arab states, were all done over soon after the war started. Pirates have established themselves in the lawless ports, and forgers manufacture everything from Johnnie Walker Black Label to Pierre Cardin clothes. The world's biggest stolen car ring operates out of Zahle. It is said that if your car is stolen anywhere in Europe a phone call to the man in Zahle will usually locate it.

Looking for the world's biggest dope dealer amidst all this mayhem is not easy. I am told in Baalbek that the mukhtar is just a man who stamps the I.D. cards, but if I go to Tripoli and look up a certain individual I may find someone with some authority, although more likely I will find a quick death. Anyway, Tripoli turns out to be not as peaceful as Ali had hoped. Eleven people are killed the night before I try to drive up there, and a few shots across the bows of the Merc convince my driver of the wisdom of turning back.

In Beirut I find a man in a grimy office in St George's, near where the empty shell of the high-rise Holiday Inn stands as a permanent monument to 1975-76 fighting. I defy anyone who has ever suffered the wallet-destroying hospitality of the international hotels not to feel a warm glow when surveying the Beirut Holiday Inn.

A block or so up the street some AMAL warriors are settling a point of purely local politics with Katyushas and hand grenades, and the man ignores this irrelevancy to tell me I should go to Alexandria where the person who could conceivably be called the world's biggest drug dealer prefers to live. I don't blame him.

●

So what do I do? I mull a piece of bread around the pigeon gravy. Outside an urchin is chewing on a smashed piece of watermelon.

"Go home. There is no story."

He is not a man to be contradicted, but I try.

"Bullshit," I say.

"Well, Mr Phillip," he replies as he picks up Khaddam's cigarettes and lighter, "you are allowed to disagree. This is a free country.

"But you are booked on a plane home this week, am I right?"

"You might know more than I do, because I haven't got the confirmation yet."

"You may want to stay a week or more, but I assure you the hospitality may not be as luxurious as this hotel. Your friend is a criminal Mr Phillip, and the police may wish to question any of his contacts — especially his foreign contacts."

And he leaves.

The next morning there are two messages at my hotel desk.

One is confirmation of an airline booking back to Sydney; the other, delivered orally, is to the effect that a certain Mr Sabbah, (of whom I've never heard) who spoke to me briefly at lunch yesterday, would like to discuss those expensive souvenirs I had said I was looking for.

I go around to the barber shop and see a couple of cops getting haircuts.

"So what's new?" I think, and catch a train.

"With this instrument, Miss Finch, blow means blow!"

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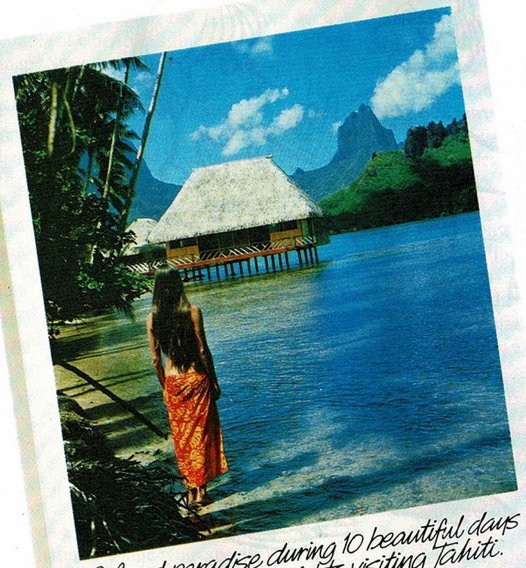

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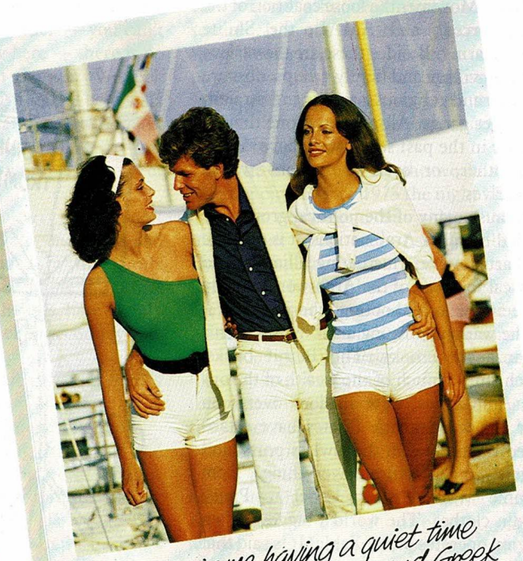

*This is me having a quiet time during my 8 day Athens and Greek Island cruise — from only $636.**

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NIFTY *(continued from page 42)*

His move up to the position of Leader of the Opposition gave Wran his first real taste of power.

Wran's pre-leadership years in the Legislative Council — and even before that as a highly successful lawyer — inflicted very few scars of sin on the portrait in the attic: he was a good student at Fort Street Boys' High in Sydney before graduating in law from Sydney University. He was admitted to the Bar in 1957, destined to qualify in time as a Queen's Counsel. His close friends were Lionel (formerly Senator, now Mr Justice) Murphy; "Diamond" Jim (former Senator, now Mr Justice) McClelland and that most discredited of Australians, John (formerly Governor-General, now exiled) Kerr. Wran's lucrative law practice specialised in the "blood and bone" game — workers' compensation cases for trade union members.

His move in 1970 from the legal compound in Phillip Street to a Legislative Council seat in Macquarie Street (and therefore a great reduction in legal work), saw him take a pay cut of around $200,000 a year. A close friend told me: "He's not a rich man, by any means."

His move up to the position of Leader of the Opposition gave Wran his first real taste of power, and the unpleasant taste of the ruthless men who demand control of their particular licit or illicit activities without too much government interference.

He learned quickly how the people Dowd refers to as "the forces out there" go to work on ambitious, aspiring political leaders.

One person with such ambition — and possible hope of eventually becoming the leader — was easily suborned. The late Police Commissioner Fred Hanson rang this person one day to say that a member of the politician's family had been arrested and charged with an indictable offence. "Naturally, I've ordered her immediate release, and all the charges will be dropped. Just thought I'd let you know." On this small ploy an otherwise honest politician was compromised — the first move by "those forces out there" had succeeded. The politician, instead of saying, "Do no such thing, let her face the music like any other citizen!", thanked the Commissioner for his kindness.

On learning of such matters, Wran took umbrage that external forces should be used so ruthlessly to compromise good, honest politicians. He was determined that Fred Hanson had to go.

Wran's Government came to power in May 1976. He had a majority of only one in the Legislative Assembly and a hostile Upper House. He once told me, in 1975, that if he was to do what he knew should be done to the State police force, he would have to sack about 60 percent of the force. "The dilemma is," he said, "that society cannot be without a police force for a day, and such a drastic move would destroy the force. It would take ages to rebuild it."

Wran's more recent tussle with the police was over the Bill Allen Affair. Allen had shown great energy and integrity in smashing a tow-truck racket involving police. When the evidence — good enough to stand up in court — was presented to Wran, he said: "Burn them" — meaning the errant cops, not the documents. Allen impressed him, and he checked with Commissioner Lees as to his integrity. "He's one of the best," came the reply.

"The trouble with dealing with the coppers," an associate of Wran said recently, "is you can't tell when they're telling you lies. And there's no way you can ring up another cop to check on them."

This was the bind in which Wran found himself with Bill Allen who, under Wran's personal patronage, had been promoted over the heads of many senior officers to Deputy Commissioner. When Allen was caught out, Wran was forced to make one of his rare back-tracks and admit he was mistaken about Allen.

How much more scar tissue Wran will experience depends largely on how long he stays on as Premier. He is a great political survivor, and has "kept the lid on" any sniff of scandal which may have brought his Government into public disrepute. And as his Government grows older, its well-kept secrets will begin to emerge.

Unlike the cynics, who on the night of the Drummoyne by-election wanted to suggest that Wran was getting ready to leave the sinking ship, it is clear to me that there is not a lot of manoeuvrability left for him. He's no longer young enough to be setting sights on higher victories like Prime Ministerships or Ruler of the World. Even his age — it's believed he is 58 — is a secret closely guarded by the Premier's staff.

To the speculation that he'd trek to Canberra, become Attorney-General for a term or two and then join his old friend Lionel Murphy on the High Court Bench, Wran comments: "I'd think I was suffering from a terminal disease if I was ever put there."

It's typical Wran: few would know his secret desires. Perhaps, if he can muster enough together in his bank account, he may even opt for a relatively early retirement from a legal and political career that is showing its strains on an otherwise healthy man.

He would miss the centre stage. His life has been a great performance. Indeed, as a youngster he was a star in a John Dease radio show on 2GB and then did some amateur acting.

"He could have been an actor, but he chose the law," a friend said.

His act in NSW politics has been an award-winning event indeed. He came to control a State after 11 years of conservative control — an era of flourishing crime and almost public displays of corruption. Yet on assuming the mantle of power, he has attracted not a whimper of provable complaint about corruption.

The casinos are still operating (depending on the whim, it seems, of the person in charge of the gaming squad); the traditional SP bookie is alive and well and operating at your local pub, despite a few crackdowns to appease the sometimes annoying media. The big crims — the corporate tycoons whose illicit manipulations of the system distort one's real sense of values by their magnitude — are thriving.

The Not So Mr Bigs of NSW are still at large. An occasional story of police corruption spills over into the public arena, but generally the lid is kept on these unsavory incidents.

Narcotics and softer drugs are freely available to those in the know.

Youth unemployment — and adult joblessness — continues at unacceptably high levels.

The education system is run down and not preparing kids for the real world.

The Government's "hollow logs" have all been cleaned out, and its economic reserves are at an all-time low. Hospitals, roads and the State power system are in all sorts of bother and disrepair.

And through all this Wran's public image is rating higher than that of any other politician in Australia.

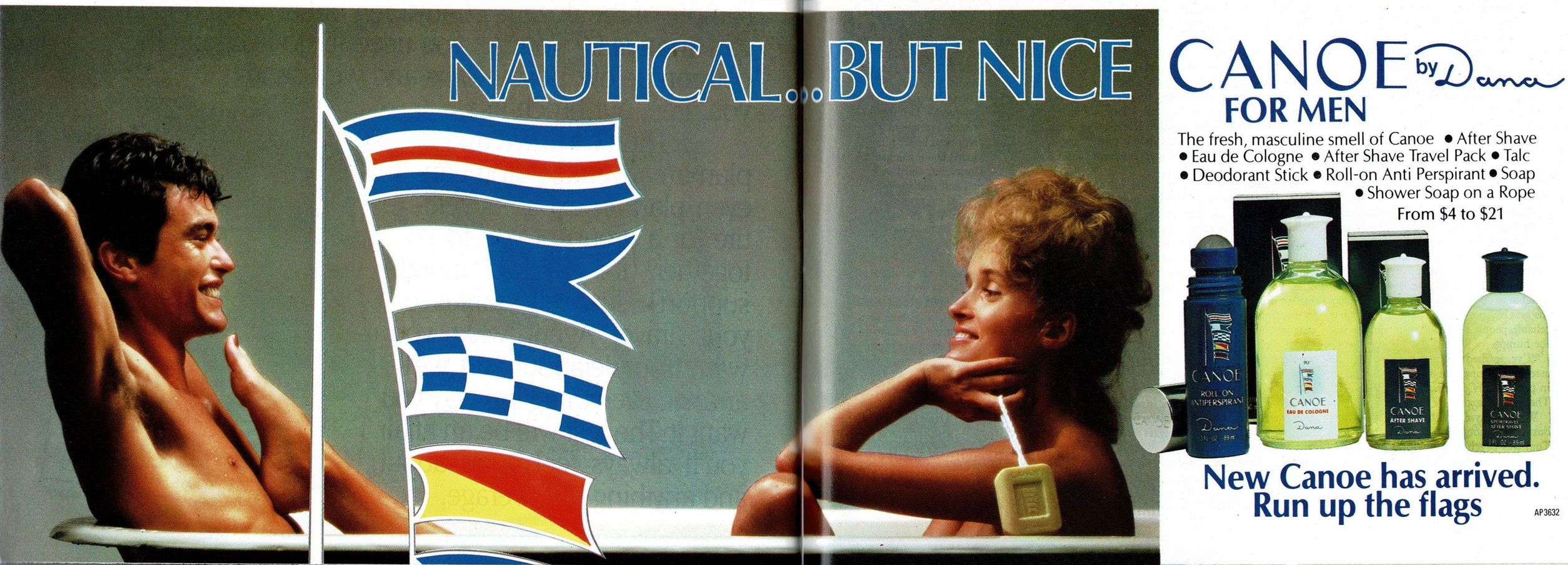
As John Dowd says: "With his public relations machine, I could sell Idi Amin to this electorate!"

Is it a case of the people not caring about the problems any more? Or is the blame being successfully sheeted home to that bad bastard in Canberra?

From a viewpoint politically more hardened than that of the general electorate, the Wran Government could be described at its best as one which has got on well with big business and his done so unabashedly. For the eager socialists in the ALP there has been bitter disappointment, with only the mildest of social reforms finding their way into the statute books.

But even for them, the most conservative Labor Government is better by far than the most progressive Liberal Government, so they continue supporting the remarkable Wran machine.

After all, in NSW, what options are there?



PUGNACIOUS (continued from page 60)

The harsh fact is that age and fortune have made Tommy's quest for his first major premiership a lost cause.

challenge. In two years, coach Warren Ryan turned a bunch of nobodies into a star outfit good enough to run Parramatta to the line in the 1981 Grand Final. Raudonikis had much to do with the project but the Newtown association had its complications. Ryan favored Ken Wilson as skipper and halfback as often as he selected Raudonikis and the rivalry ran right up to Grand Final eve when Raudonikis was handed the number seven shirt after shaking off a 15-week absence from first grade. Ryan had wanted to replace Raudonikis 10 minutes into the second half and told him so at the break.

But Tommy pulled out everything during that period and made his substitution impossible by scoring a try to put Newtown in touch of the trophy.

On reflection, he should have retired then. A few years ago he was the best halfback, but 1981 found him struggling to beat off the challenge of a man not rated in the top bracket. Rival clubs stripped Newtown of its stars during the off-season and it must have been obvious there would be no trophies for the club or Raudonikis in 1982.

The harsh fact is that age and fortune have made Tommy's quest for his first major premiership a lost cause. Newtown knew it and a month before completion of his suspension pleaded with him to retire. The ignominy of seeing out the season in third grade was hardly a fitting end to such a career, argued Newtown. In truth, the club's concern ran deeper; Newtown said Raudonikis had not honored his training commitments during the first half of the suspension. Rising 32 years, his ambition to return for a furious, final flourish had to be doubted.

The fact was, a few days before Newtown pulled him on over the training problem, Tommy was piecing together a deal to buy a high-class gymnasium in Parramatta. With it, and the royalties he cops from a sports store flying under his name, it would make a suitable nest egg. Sportsmen do not make the best businessmen but Tommy has a few reliable people around him to smooth out the bumps.

"I've learned from my mistakes," he asserts. "I dropped about $16,000 by going in prematurely on a squash complex deal. That was an expensive lesson."

With the gym deal locked away and his boxing promotions temporarily shelved, Tom was psyching himself his own rugby league version of Rorke's Drift. If Tommy was going out, he planned to go out fighting.

●

It's hard to escape the impression Tommy Raudonikis has mellowed a helluva lot. As he relaxes in the surrounds of his Parramatta gym, his conversation is relayed in past tense.

"Do you know," he says with a trace of regret, "I had only two wedding anniversaries at home in 11 years? I was always away on tour."

He obviously regrets the impositions on his family life but he cherishes the memories of touring.

"Touring is the ultimate football experience. You know you're there because you're the best and you're with guys who you respect because they've been chosen for the same reason. It becomes like a family after a while."

On the odd occasion when the family relaxes to the limit, things do get damaged. Rugby league is a physical game and its players work and play hard. Raudonikis once had the final word in a water fight by flooding the entire floor of a Huddersfield hotel when he switched on a fire hose. On a 1980 New Zealand tour, the players were relaxing in an Auckland pub when Tom decided to streak through the bar. But as he emerged from the toilet naked, he ran into Australian rugby league supremo Kevin Humphreys who suggested the streak wasn't such a good idea. Only a few players have earned Never To Tour Again classifications for misbehaving abroad, and Raudonikis isn't among them. He has however, been censured, fined, threatened, bawled out and everything else short of being sent home. When based in Huddersfield during the 1973 Kangaroo tour, several players bought old bangers as a form of transport.

Raudonikis and Graham Eadie had a little Morris, Arthur Beetson and Bob O'Reilly had an old Zephyr Six and Tim Pickup had a car of equivalent vintage. The boys would turn up an hour before training and stage stock-car derbies around the cinder track perimeter of the football field. They got caught by the manager who put a halt to it before somebody got killed.

Raudonikis' "mean machine" mentality emerged in England when he refused to shake hands with rival skippers and wreaked destruction during the games. In a game against Featherstone Rovers, he just managed to avoid an enraged fan who had jumped the fence to clobber Raudonikis after the Aussie half had creamed Stevie Nash with what Tom described as "the best stiff-arm I have ever given anybody."

When opposing players discovered Raudonikis could absorb punishment as well as deliver it, his respect rating soared. Stories of Raudonikis playing on despite broken bones and other serious injuries abound. Pain is a familiar acquaintance and Tom has lost count of the cortisone and pain-killing jabs he's had. The body can stand only so much torture and amid all the cuts, breaks, strains and bruises, Raudonikis can isolate a match when he played on carrying a torn rib cartilage as one of his most painful experiences.

It takes a special sort of self-motivation to back up week after week and absorb that sort of punishment. But sometimes even that resolve deserts players of Raudonikis' courage.

"Sure, I've taken bombs," he admits. "When you're playing football for eight months of the year, the pressure to perform week after week is so great that sometimes it's impossible to be in the right frame of mind every week."

The amphetamines scandal has run close to the surface in rugby league circles for years but never before has a player of Raudonikis' stature been so forthright on the subject.

The issue had a humorous sidelight when Wests' coach Roy Masters, a man whose motivational methods included face-slapping sessions before the players went on the field, put his team on what they thought were uppers. They were placebos but one player was so convinced of the effects he later claimed they were the best bombs he'd ever had. They kept him awake all night.

If Raudonikis is sincere about his plans to retire, it will be a painful parting. When the Kangaroos head for England this year Raudonikis plans to be in tow, but not as a player. He has planned a boxing tour of the UK to coincide with the league visit.

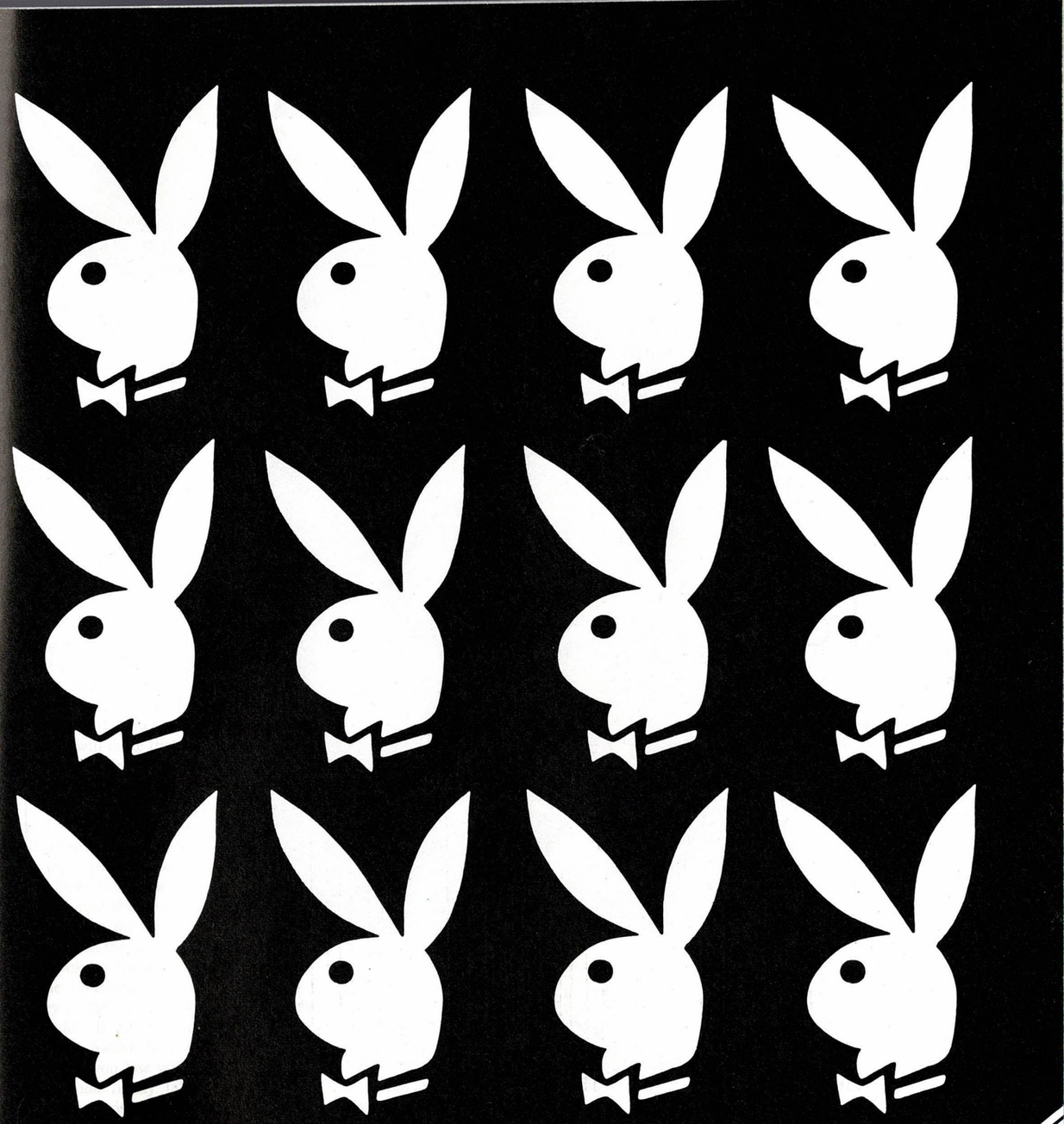
"I'll take a troupe of fighters and we can follow the league around," he says.

Unlike so many others who've dipped out of the city ranks, Raudonikis has no ideas about a comfortable semi-retirement playing in the country. Nor does he see himself as a coach. He's worried about the game's future but he's not losing any sleep over it; his family comes first and that's where he says he'll be devoting his energy to see his kids have a secure future. The mellowing of Raudonikis just might have robbed him of that combativeness which made him so great as the killer half. He says he doesn't get into as many scrapes as he used to because there is nothing to be proved by beating somebody who might come back with a gun to even the score. When Tom Raudonikis talks in those terms and explains his speed, reflexes and guile around the scrum base aren't what they used to be, his plans to retire have to be taken seriously.

"Yeah," he concludes, "I'll be definitely taking a break next year. There's no way I'll be playing."

And then comes the escape route.

"Not unless I stop playing half and make the full-time switch to play lock."



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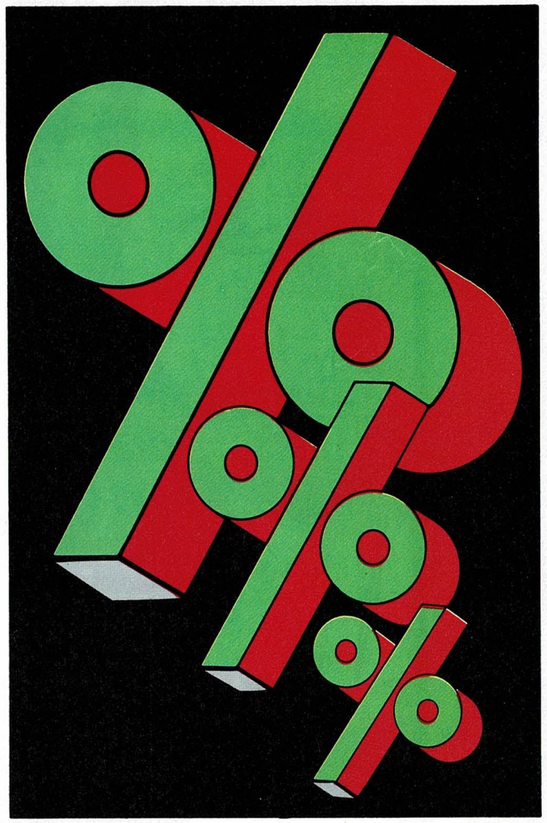
VERY INTERESTING

in today's economic climate, just coming out ahead is pretty good

LET'S SAY you have somehow managed to save $5000. It wasn't easy, but you did it, and now you want to protect what you have. What is the most conservative investment you can make? The traditional answer to this question is to deposit your money in a savings account and collect interest at 12.5 percent. In one year, with no work on your part, you will have at least $4882 in spending power left.

This calculation assumes that inflation will run at 10 percent and that your income is taxed at the minimum rate. If you are taxed at a higher rate, or if inflation increases, you will be left with even *less*. Bank managers are fond of noting that $5000 deposited at 12.5 percent interest will double after six years. What they usually fail to point out is that income tax and inflation will make that $10,000 worth less than the $5000 you started with.

So, what are you supposed to do? Clearly a savings account will not make you rich; in fact, it may make you a bit poorer each year. Does this mean that you should forget about savings and head straight for the commodities market, the stock exchange or the pokies? Not at all. You may be losing a little spending power by putting your money in the bank, but you won't lose the whole lot. If all you have is $5000, you would be foolish to risk losing it. What happens if you lose your job, or your car's transmission finally falls apart? No, you don't want a riskier investment. What you want is an investment as safe as the bank that pays much higher interest, enough to actually put you ahead *after* taxes and inflation. What you want, in fact, is to put your $5000 into one of the money market trusts.



Money market trusts originated in America and spread to Australia at the end of 1980 when the Hill Samuel Cash Management Trust was established. Today, there are more than a dozen trusts operating in Australia. Although there are some differences among them (some require a $5000 initial deposit, others will take $2000 or less), all money market trusts operate on the same principle. Your money is combined with money invested by other depositors and the total amount is invested in short-term interest bearing securities. The total buying power of the funds (over $500 million has been invested in the Hill Samuel Cash Management Trust, alone) permits them to diversify their investments and to obtain volume discounts. Also, by combining funds from many depositors, the trusts can invest in securities that individual depositors could not afford.

The funds do not charge a sales fee. Instead, the managers take a small (less than one percent) cut off the top of any interest they earn. Unless you are a millionaire who likes to spend his time buying and selling securities (and what good is being rich if this is how you are going to spend your time?), this fee has to be one of the best bargains going.

Most money market trusts limit their holdings to government bonds and bank-backed securities. This means that for you, the small saver, a deposit in a money market trust is no riskier than a savings account. It is also just as convenient. You can withdraw all or part of your funds at any time (often by telephone) and you can have your earnings posted to you or paid directly into your bank account. If Australian trusts follow American trends, it may soon be possible to write cheques on your money market account, as well.

Your money market trust investment may be as safe and as convenient as a savings account but there is one crucial difference between the two. The interest you earn on your bank savings account is usually fixed for some period of time whereas the interest your money earns in a money market trust changes daily. In "easy" money times, the rate paid by a money market trust will be little different from the interest paid by banks. During a credit "squeeze" however, the money market trusts offer far higher rates than the bank.

In April, 1982, for example, credit was very tight indeed. The banks were paying 12.5 percent interest for "investment" savings accounts and slightly higher rates for interest bearing deposits. At the same time, the money market trusts were paying between 18 and 19 percent interest. Indeed, from their foundation in Australia, the money market trusts have consistently paid at least four percent higher interest than the highest bank deposit rate for a similar amount of money.

Money market trusts are listed in the financial pages of many newspapers so that it is easy to see what they are paying each day.

You can make deposits by mail or in person at their office in your city or you can invest through a sharebroker.

I should mention here that although 18 percent sounds like a lot of interest, you will only get that much during highly inflationary periods. After taxes and 10 percent inflation, even 18 percent interest only leaves you slightly better off. Eighteen percent of $5000 is $900. After paying about $288 in income tax (or more, if you are in a higher bracket) and after deducting $561 for inflation, you will be left with only a $51 increase in spending power. In case it's not already clear, even money market trusts will not make you rich. Few safe investments will.

But, $40 still beats losing, and in today's economic climate, just coming out ahead is pretty good.

— STEVEN SCHWARTZ

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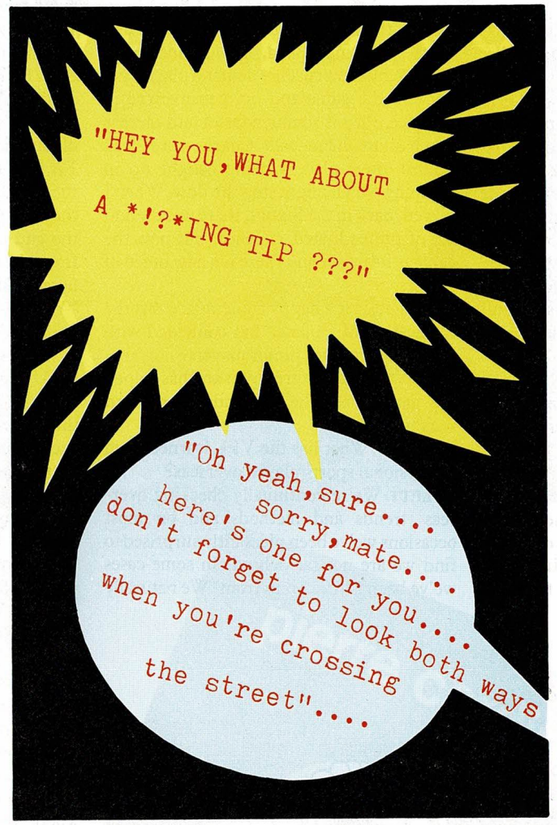
TIPPING TIPS

a small outlay can often bring great rewards

THE ORIGINS of the term "tipping" are not actually known but it has been suggested that "tips" originally stood for "to insure proper service".

My first exposure to tipping came at the tender age of eight. I had not been aware of the practice until I went on an ocean voyage with my grandparents. After we had been shown to our cabins, my grandfather gave the cabin steward five pounds, a princely sum in 1947. I can remember grandad saying: "There will be another fiver for you after the trip." I couldn't understand why my grandfather was giving away all this money, but one thing was obvious; we were *very* well looked after during the voyage.

Australians have always had a reputation as lousy tippers. It goes against the grain for Aussies to tip a person just for doing their job. After all, who tips *us* for doing *our* jobs at the office or factory? Most of us equate tips with well-heeled Yanks and expense-account travellers. . . why should we throw around our hard-earned cash when we get charged a fortune for most services anyway?


"HEY YOU, WHAT ABOUT A *!?*ING TIP ???"
"Oh yeah, sure.... sorry, mate.... here's one for you.... don't forget to look both ways when you're crossing the street"....

But, despite this attitude, we show our appreciation to various tradesmen, to the postman at Christmas, and not many of us can resist dishing something out when the garbos rattle their cans for a bit of seasonal cheer. In these circumstances, a tip becomes an investment.

Let's take an example of this investment angle. You want to impress the latest lady in your life. Or, more importantly, you want to get her into bed. But, you also want her to think you've got class. Trouble is, she doesn't even know you exist and all the other blokes in the offices have already been putting in heavy work on her. Start off by sending her a single rose — no card, just the rose. She'll go crazy trying to work out who's sent it. Next day, follow up with another single rose, but this time include a card inviting her for lunch. She won't refuse. Lunches are non-threatening. The trick now is to convert the lunch to dinner. Make an excuse that the boss wants you to work through your lunch-hour on the appointed day and tell her how disappointed you are and could she please make dinner instead. And this is where tipping will help you score. Select a classy restaurant — it's not going to cost you that much more than an average place and remember that this is an investment in the outcome of the evening. Make a reservation well in advance and ask the receptionist or waiter who takes the booking for the name of the head waiter. Now comes the crucial step. Go to the restaurant the night before your big date and introduce yourself to the head waiter. Address him by name. . . he'll be impressed that you've taken the trouble to find out this information. Tell him you'll be dining at his restaurant with a very special friend, discreetly slip him $10 and ask him to look after you personally on the big night.

It's true that most top restaurants will look after you well anyway, but you don't want to take any chances.

As you enter the restaurant on the appointed evening, the head waiter will greet you warmly, call you by name and seat you and your date at a romantic table for two. He will hover around all evening to ensure that his favorite customer has a wonderful time. When the bill arrives, don't spoil everything by leaving a poor tip. At least 10 percent is normal, but even 15 percent would be in order if everything has gone according to plan.

After dessert and coffee, suggest a night cap at your apartment. Tell her how much you'd value her opinion on a new French after-dinner wine you've just received. If all this bullshit doesn't work, then it looks as if you're a born loser and even the most extravagant show of tipping isn't going to get you anywhere.

Tipping is, of course, usually more straightforward. And accepting that it's often standard practice and good manners to leave a gratuity, how much *should* we pay for service? This question becomes particularly relevant when travelling overseas and encountering different cultures and customs. In the United States, for example, people in service industries are not paid very well and they often depend on tips to survive. As a result, the service is usually far superior, particularly at lower levels, than we are used to in Australia.

In the States, it is customary to tip a doorman between 50 cents and a dollar for hailing a cab or helping with suitcases. Porters taking cases to your room expect around 75 cents per case. In restaurants, a minimum of 10 to 15 percent of the bill is the usual tip.

In Europe, it's common practice to add 10 to 20 percent service charge to a restaurant bill. Check to see if the bill or menu includes *service compris, incluso* or *eingeschlossen* followed by a percentage figure. If not, a 15 percent tip is usually a safe figure.

In Asia, too, service charge is often automatically added to your meal bills and sometimes to your accommodation account as well. In Hong Kong, for example, you're slugged 10 percent service charge and four percent government tax on your hotel bill.

In Australia, well, just about anything goes. Ten percent is the norm in better restaurants. For drinks, just the small change.

And don't be begrudging about the whole business. The tip means nothing without a smile and a "thank you". — JOHN POND

ALLEN AYLETT *(continued from page 39)*

No team can afford to carry a player who is out there purely in the capacity of a hit man.

at junior level because Australian football is dominated by those boys destined to be taller and more powerful than average?

AYLETT: Actually it works in reverse. There was a period during the Sixties when coaches went for really big guys, but that trend has swung right around. Now, the game's demands are such that it is probably one sport which accommodates a broad range of physical types.

Basketball is basically a game for tall guys, whereas in rugby you don't get too many guys over six feet six. But these days we tend to get players from all physical types, according to their function.

PLAYBOY: Violence in football has become a real issue in all codes, but the demands of modern Australian football appear to have surmounted the problem. How has that happened?

AYLETT: There has been a real trend away from premeditated violence because no team can afford to carry a player who is out there purely in the capacity of a hit man. It reduces the side to 17 players, and a good team can exploit that. Accidents will happen in any sport involving speed, power and body contact, but now coaches demand players get on with the game and not get involved in violence. Play is so much faster and there is much more hand-ball. Coaches are dead against their players being caught up in anything which might stop the flow. When I played, back in the Sixties, there was the odd act of premeditated violence, but now the game is different and there is a new breed of players.

PLAYBOY: Is it a happy coincidence that the eradication of violence has coincided with the drive to recruit junior players?

AYLETT: It's been a great plus and has helped the game meet the demands of modern society.

PLAYBOY: What has the VFL learned from professional sports played overseas?

AYLETT: We're continually checking overseas trends and methods and on most occasions we've been pleasantly surprised to find we are not far behind. In some cases we've been a little bit in front. We naturally follow about five to 10 years behind the Americans in whatever they do, even in these times of sophisticated communications. That gives us an advantage because by continually monitoring their ideas and watching their progress, we can pick up anything that might go wrong and thereby avoid making the same mistakes.

PLAYBOY: Do you think overseas sports administrators could learn anything from the VFL?

AYLETT: Yes. Take English soccer — it really beats me why they don't have a top four play-off and final situation. I know they have the FA Cup Final which is watched all around the world, but just think of the possibilities if they had a play-off between the top teams at the end of their season. We've had people from the English Football Association out here looking at our finals and they've said, "Yes, we should do that", but it has never happened.

PLAYBOY: Is that an example of tradition working against the good of the game?

AYLETT: Yes. I believe one of the greatest things in the world is the concept of exchanging ideas. It means you can take the best from everywhere and apply them to your situation. We practise that policy and it has been one of the reasons we've been able to develop.

PLAYBOY: Does that concept also apply to your professional dentistry practice?

AYLETT: Well, yes. After several visits to the United States we arrived at the decision to adopt a principle based completely on prevention. We treat people as whole people, rather than just looking at the patient as just another mouth. That's where medical and dental care is heading, there is no doubt about that, and it's better if we're in it from the outset. We've set up an environment where the patient can relax in pleasant surroundings, learn a lot, and be treated as a whole person.

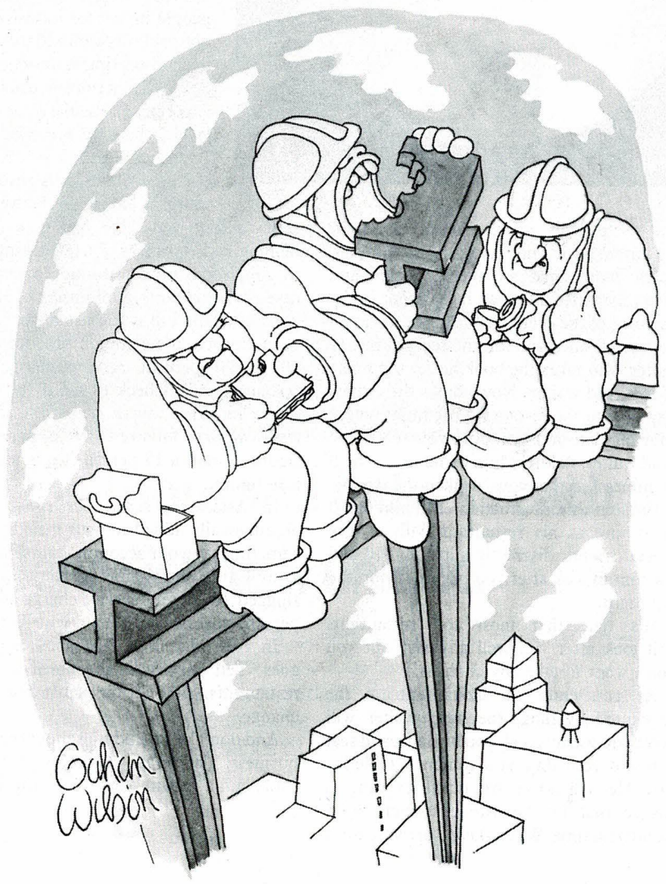
PLAYBOY: The VFL presidency is obviously very demanding and your dentistry practice must absorb much time and energy. How do you cope on both fronts?

AYLETT: It's becoming increasingly more difficult. As I said before, as you expand and develop, a by-product is that the problems also increase. But I'm surrounded by a lot of good people, including my family, the staff in here and the VFL general manager, Jack Hamilton. So, there are a lot of people supporting me. I'm a bloke who becomes deeply committed to whatever I get involved with and that attitude makes it work. I don't mind working. I'll often arrive here at five o'clock in the morning and leave at 11 at night on a football day. On Wednesday I was in here at five as the cleaners were finishing. The contractor, an Italian guy, thinks I'm mad.

PLAYBOY: You must get about four hours sleep some nights?

AYLETT: I like sleep as much as anybody, but when you've got a lot of commitments you can always do with less sleep.

PLAYBOY: How do you relax?



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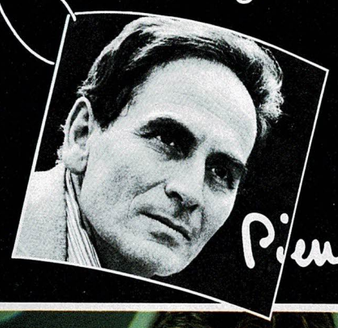

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AYLETT: I have my work and I have football — one is relaxation from the other. Today I had an interview at six, conducted various meetings, met the Premier at 11 and performed a few other tasks. This afternoon I'll be involved in my practice and the new ideas we're introducing. Now, that's a totally different scene from football and it means I'm not likely to get bored. Football is so different from my professional life, and I'm so wrapped up in it that it doesn't seem like work.

PLAYBOY: More like a grand hobby perhaps?

AYLETT: You could say that.

PLAYBOY: Your work means dealing with people on a large scale. How do you view the tribal, mass support generated by the VFL clubs?

AYLETT: Well, the word so heavily used to describe it is "religion". To some people the team is the most important thing in their lives.

PLAYBOY: As has happened in Britain during the past two decades, that fanaticism has sometimes become violent. We're seen fighting among fans at VFL matches resulting this year in the death of a bystander. Can the VFL cope with the problem of crowd violence?

AYLETT: We've been aware of it, and we've taken steps to try to keep ahead of it. Investigations have been held into the amount of alcohol brought into grounds or sold during the matches. Two weeks before the death of the spectator this year we had implemented our own inquiries. I just felt it was time we moved again on the question of alcohol. The last club survey on the subject was held in 1979 and it was time to be acting again. In 1979 we arrived at certain conclusions and took certain measures. This time we met again and formed a sub-committee just before the death occurred. So, we had measures in progress to tackle the problem.

The death might have occurred in 10 weeks time or next season, but it didn't. For that reason it was the Government who made the announcement on alcohol restrictions. We're starting surveys around the grounds so we can get the right picture on the subject. It's a very complex issue because there are so many factors involved. There are those responsible people who resent being inconvenienced for the sake of a few hooligans; there are millions of dollars' worth of catering rights involved.

PLAYBOY: How important are ground facilities in the matter of spectator control?

AYLETT: Facilities and spectator comfort are probably the answers. All studies show that when spectators are seated they are much happier, more comfortable and less likely to cause trouble. Ideally, grounds should provide seating for everyone.

PLAYBOY: Is the VFL still pursuing a policy to encourage clubs to pool resources and develop grounds on a shared basis?

AYLETT: Yes. It is not an easy project because, once again, there is a lot of tradition and history involved. But we know with teams playing home and away, it would be possible to develop six top class grounds rather than 12. We're also faced with the ridiculous situation in this State where they won't let us play football on Sundays.

Take VFL Park — it was built from football people's money and there are 80,000 seats out there which can't be used on Sundays. Add to that the MCG's 80,000 and you have 160,000 seats which cannot be used on Sundays. Imagine what Sydney would be able to do if they had 160,000 seats available. It's unbelievable!

PLAYBOY: The problem of facilities is obviously a national one. Perhaps the most recently publicised incident is the defeat by conservationists of Parramatta Rugby League Club's proposal to develop a new ground.

AYLETT: We had the Parramatta people down here looking at ideas they could utilise for their project. We were amazed to learn they had run into so much trouble with their plans.

Facilities cost so many millions of dollars. It works out currently at about $500 per seat. If you want to provide 10,000 seats that works out at $5 million. Now, there are 160,000 seats available here, that's $80 million being locked up for half the time we would want access.

PLAYBOY: It might not be obvious to the current generation of young players, but the VFL President played 225 games for North Melbourne, captained the club, represented the State and won a player-of-the-series award at the Australian championships.

How would you have described yourself as a player?

AYLETT: I was shrewd, perhaps what they call a thinking player. For instance, I wasn't fast but I made up for it with shrewdness. I always wanted to do well and even in practice games I always wanted my team to win. I suppose I was a very competitive and shrewd player.

PLAYBOY: Were you durable?

AYLETT: Yes. I didn't suffer many injuries and I guess you could say I came out on top in most of the physical clashes.

PLAYBOY: As a player and a budding dentist, did you imagine you would eventually move into the administrative ranks?

AYLETT: I always knew I would. I never imagined doing anything else. During my playing days I enjoyed the scene so much that I always wanted to stay in football and I wanted to do it with my club.

PLAYBOY: Players traditionally hold a dim view of board members and committee men. Does that worry you?

AYLETT: There are a lot of people out there, including players who would have no idea the President of the VFL played 250-odd games.

I don't like that. I'd much rather people know that I've come through the mill, experienced all the traumas as a player and a football lover, and know what it is like.

PLAYBOY: Do you feel that sports administration can be a rather thankless task at times?

AYLETT: Definitely.

PLAYBOY: I think it was soccer manager Tommy Docherty who said there are only two kinds of good board members: one dead and the other dying. Does that sentiment apply in the VFL?

AYLETT: Any football administrator who gets into the business thinking his role will be regarded with gratitude is kidding himself.

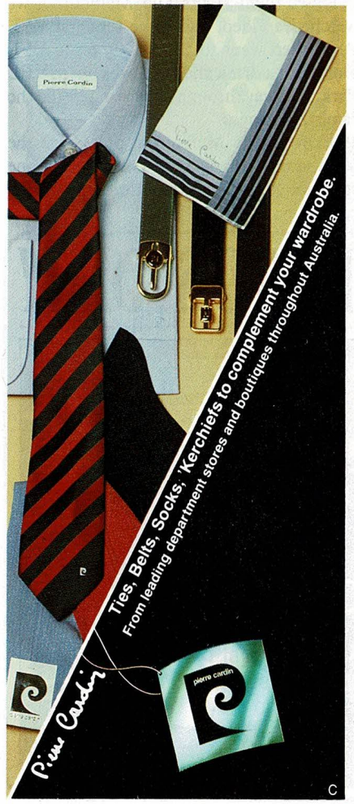
PLAYBOY: It obviously requires a versatile mind to adminster sport at this level. Did you ever consider an alternative vocation to dentistry?

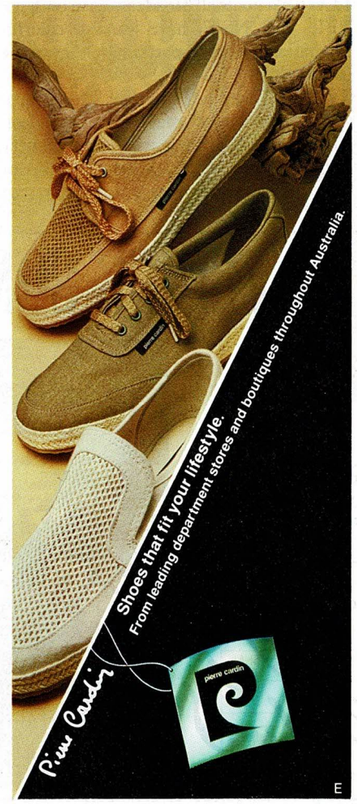
AYLETT: The only other one I might have considered was medicine.

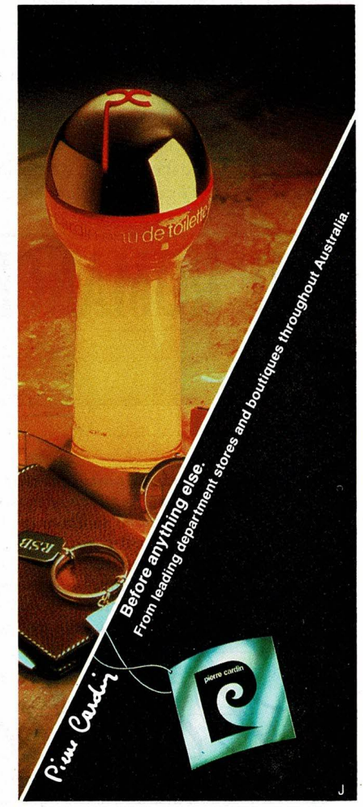
PLAYBOY: Your lifestyle must place tremendous impositions on your private and family life. How do the members of your family cope with a father and husband who has such a high public profile?

AYLETT: I'm very lucky. I met my wife, Marge, when we were in school. While I did dentistry at Melbourne University, Marge was doing pharmacy, so all the changes that have taken place since then have more or less happened to the both of us. She has been brought up with the football scene and has learned to love the game as much as I do.

However, she realises at times that being a







football administrator can be a thankless task, and that gets to her a bit. Generally speaking, she has been super-supportive and, in fact, in all my operations for the past three years, Marge has really acted as my general manager. Our four children have all been very supportive and good kids. One is 22 and a pilot with TAA; the second one is 20 and he's finishing his final year of hotel catering management; our daughter is doing first year physiotherapy and our youngest boy is 11. They love football and the environment it creates, and they've been a constant family support to me. If I hadn't had that sort of support, either my family would have been finished or I wouldn't be doing this.

PLAYBOY: What has the VFL achieved in its drive to promote the game in the youth market?

AYLETT: In the past six years we've recorded a 70 percent growth rate in junior teams in Victoria. That's simply incredible. The game at junior level has received a tremendous lift from the TV coverage. Young players can see the top players performing in front of big crowds, and it gives them something to aim for. It is also a great coaching device, because they can see how the game should be played. It's a very healthy scene.

PLAYBOY: What ideas do you have in store to improve the game and its administration?

AYLETT: We've recently released an extensive report which looks at the VFL in its entirety, examines the fallacies and pairs them with the facts. It's a very readable document, and we'll be making it available to anyone who could benefit from the information. Another project we're launching is to offer football administration cadetships to people under 21. The kids will be chosen from applicants who attend a series of lectures, and the successful ones will be sent out to the 12 clubs. It will be like a scholarship, and will mean that every club will have young people coming through the administrative ranks.

PLAYBOY: If you were a professional sports consultant with inside experience of the VFL administration, and you were engaged by the NSW Rugby League or a Sydney club, what would be your advice?

AYLETT: I couldn't comment on that. We've got quite a good rapport with Kevin Humphreys (NSW Rugby League President), and we often discuss areas of mutual benefit. But I'm not qualified to comment on their game.

PLAYBOY: Have you been happy with the coverage the NSW media has given the Sydney Swans?

AYLETT: Yes, it's been fabulous. We've had a lot of the Sydney press guys down here for different functions and we've been up there for others, and we seem to have developed a great relationship with the NSW media.

Another project we're launching is to offer football administration cadetships to people under 21. They will be like scholarships.

PLAYBOY: Football broadcasters in both the VFL and NSW have earned colorful reputations. How important are they to the codes?

AYLETT: Take, for example, the people we've got in Melbourne — Jack Dyer, Lou Richards and company. They're very colorful characters, and when you think of VFL and what it means to Melbourne people, those guys must form part of the picture.

PLAYBOY: Were you worried about what sort of reception the Sydney media would turn on for the Swans?

AYLETT: No, not really. During the three years we played VFL matches in Sydney, our media executive, Ian McDonald, had worked very hard in getting to know the Sydney press, some of whom would be ex-Melbourne people anyway. He won their trust and provided them with all the information they needed, and by the time the Swans arrived we had a fair idea the media coverage would be satisfactory.

All the VFL clubs are very open to the press all the time and we've been getting positive feedback from that policy, particularly from the Sydney media.

PLAYBOY: Is it obvious that the Sydney media is impressed by the VFL's professional approach?

AYLETT: I would like to think so. We've tried to do things in a sensible, efficient manner, and although the Sydney campaign might have looked like a deliberate exercise, that's what we do here all the time. For instance, every football Saturday at VFL Park we have the Football Luncheon, which is really a super event. Those official luncheons are on at the other grounds and you'll find senior representatives of the media along with staff and football officials. When we played our second season in Sydney we flew media representatives down to Melbourne for the day.

I met them at the Old Melbourne, we watched a video, had some lunch at VFL Park, then went to the MCG, on to VFL House for a drink and then back out to VFL Park. Midway through this season we did the same thing again.

PLAYBOY: The Melbourne press give the VFL saturation coverage. I recall a page one story about an international leadership crisis

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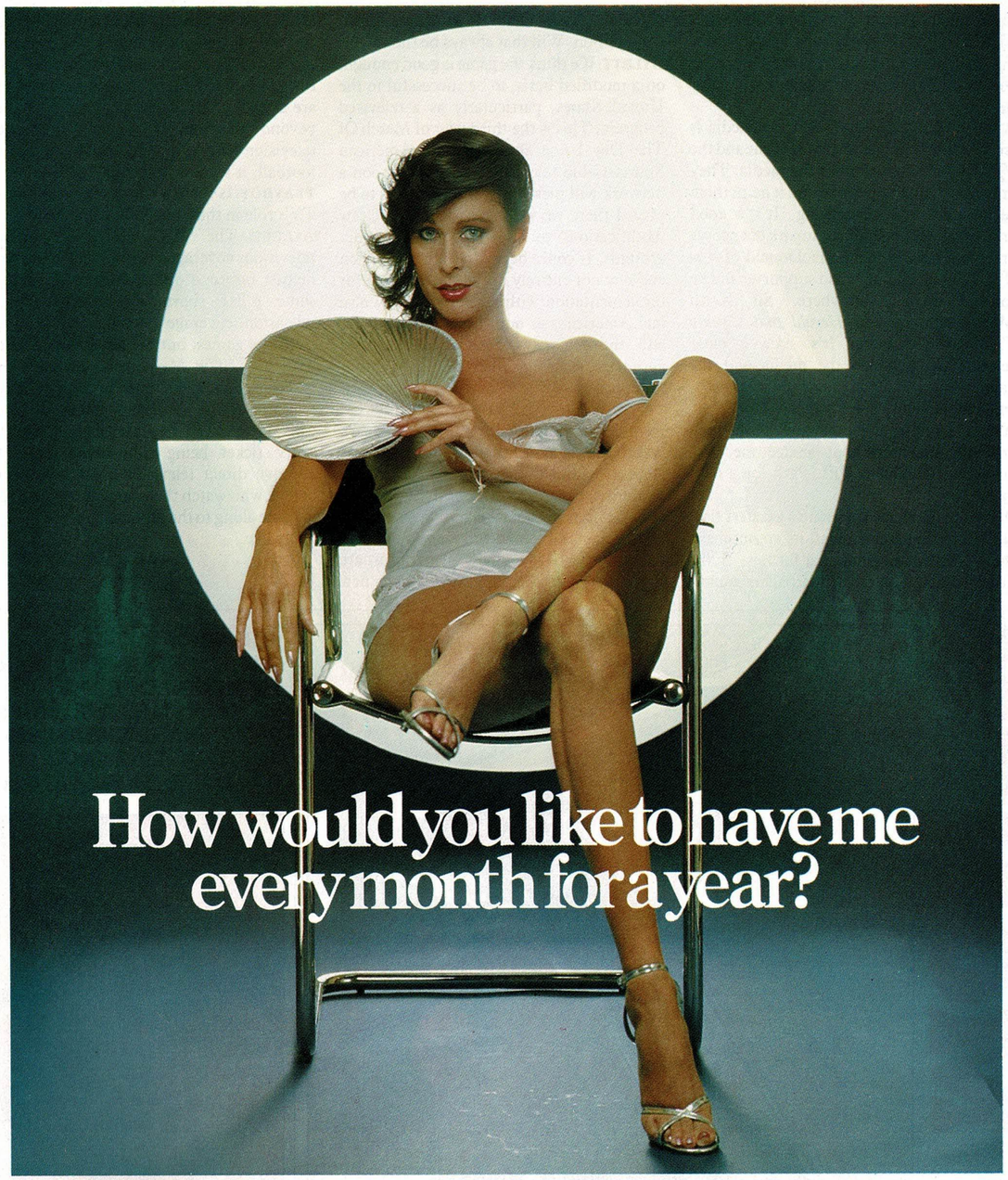

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AUSTRALIAN PLAYBOY

involving three prominent figures, Margaret Thatcher, Ronald Reagan and Frank Hafey, the former Collingwood coach. To people outside Melbourne that might seem a little ridiculous.

AYLETT: Yes [*laughing*]. But the media is tremendously important to the game and the VFL is very important to the media. They know football is so popular and it helps them sell papers and advertising. It's a good arrangement. Some of the top media people are great fans. Ranald MacDonald of *The Age* is a great Collingwood supporter and he follows them everywhere. Sir Keith MacPherson of *The Herald and Weekly Times* is the same. It's such a close relationship between the media and the game.

PLAYBOY: Nearly everybody is a fan?

AYLETT: Yes, nearly everybody. But there are still incidents that amaze me, like attracting 93,000 to VFL Park for a club game.

PLAYBOY: Perhaps the game's greatest flaw and a limiting factor on all its ambitions is that it has no international forum. Unlike other sports, Australian footballers cannot represent their country in international competition. Will that always be the case?

AYLETT: We think the game is good enough, on a modified basis, to be successful in the United States, particularly as a televised program. This is the third year of Match Of The Day being shown by the American Sports Cable television, and pretty soon a network will pick it up. If the game is to be played there we will have to look for a few modifications to allow for their smaller grounds. It could be an exciting innovation and one not entirely out of the question for implementation within a few years. We've had Americans as our guests at VFL Park, and the majority of them immediately appreciate the sheer entertainment value of the sport.

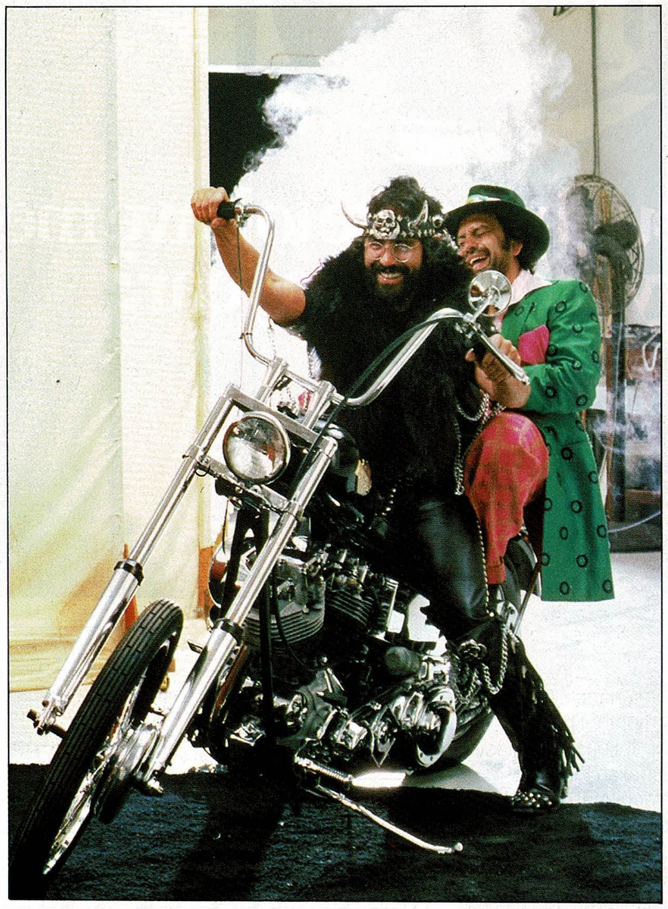
PLAYBOY: Is that because it is very different from their own football?

AYLETT: It is a lot faster and there are less stoppages, and that appeals to Americans. People have more leisure time these days and with communications becoming so sophisticated, it is easier to introduce new forms of entertainment. We know Americans are great sports watchers and are open to new ideas, and we have a product they are almost certain to find entertaining. Any strong move into the American market would have to be properly thought out, but the elements are already there. I feel people are looking beyond the soapies for new forms of television entertainment, and if you look at football, it's got everything.

PLAYBOY: Is there a risk of over-estimating TV's role in the game's development?

AYLETT: The VFL receives a massive television coverage, but we've found it's helped improve our attendances. I know some other sports are worried about television coverage keeping people away from the games, but the reverse appears to have worked in Melbourne. By the same token we're careful not to do any direct telecasts of the Saturday games played in Melbourne. Even the grand final is subject to every ticket being sold before we will approve direct television rights. It seems people who watch the game on TV are keen to come along to the grounds to see what it is really like.

NEXT MONTH



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AS THE PLAYBOY INTERVIEWER ALMOST GOES UP IN SMOKE

JOHN ANDREW STUART — MASS MURDERER OR MERE SCAPEGOAT? FRANK ROBSON STIRS THE ASHES OF BRISBANE'S WHISKEY-AU-GO-GO FIRE AND DISCOVERS MORE VICTIMS

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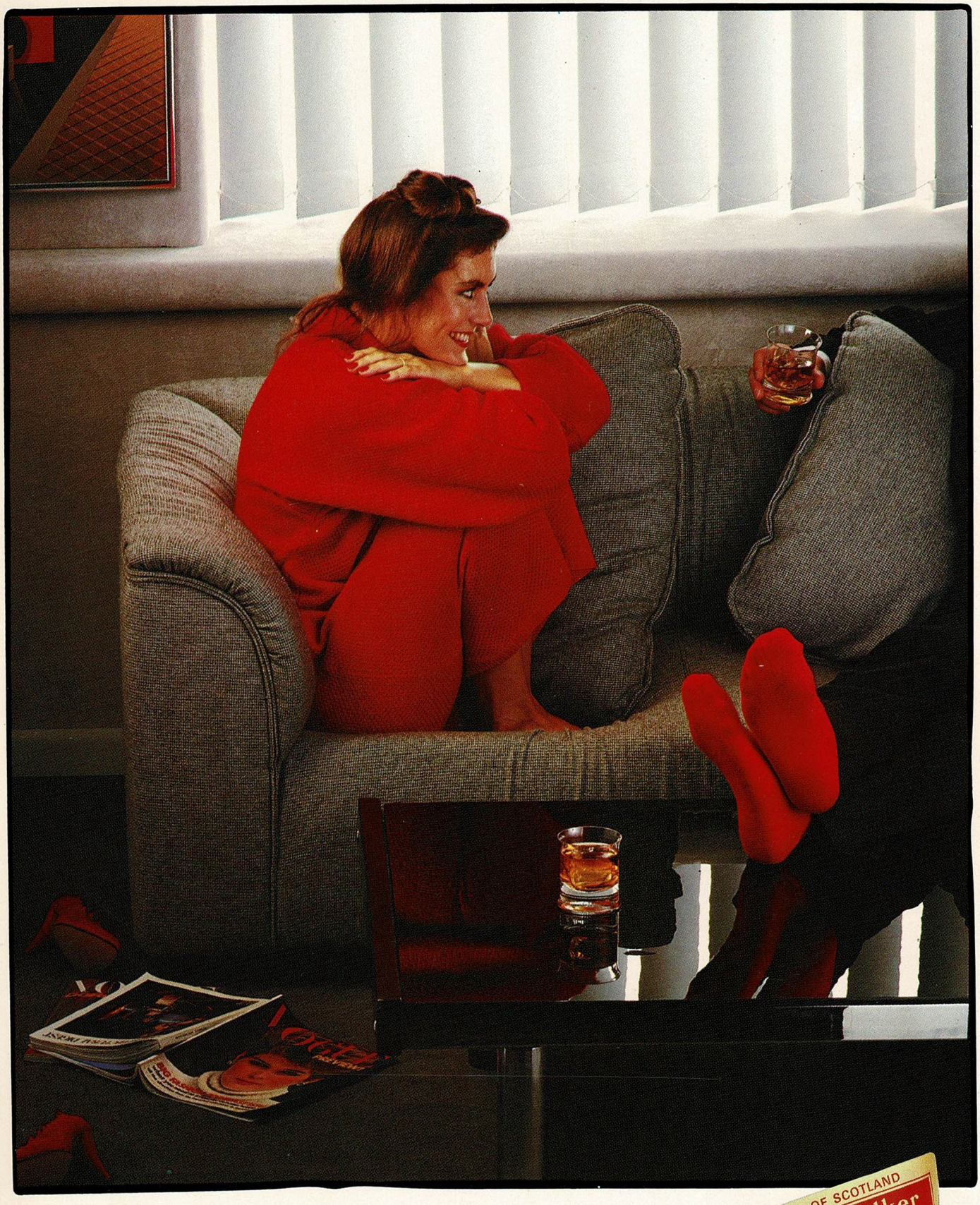

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